Radiance

A Forum for Kriya Yoga Initiates
January – March 1998 Number 15

LET THE LIGHT OF TRUTH LEAD YOU

Dedicated kriya yoga disciples should not have any doubts about the final outcome of their endeavors. Their constructive tendencies have brought them to this path; their continued right actions and God's grace will liberate them.

Light Through the Ages

THE SHIVA SAMHITA

An examination of a primary source of information on the philosophy and practices of yoga. A continuing series.

Dialogue

PHILOSOPHY, TRADITIONS & PRACTICES

Open discussion. Reader participation invited.

Addendum

Our Responsiveness to Grace Assures Our Salvation

Guidelines to grace-empowered living.
Special days for meditation in March.
Kriya yoga meditation groups.

Souls which are devotedly surrendered entirely in God are provided by God's grace with all they need [for accomplishing their purposes], and what they have already attained they never lose.

– Bhagavad Gita 9:22 –

Publisher's Note

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Let the Light of Truth Lead You

In the early 1950s, during an informal talk to disciples who had gathered in the chapel in the Self-Realization Fellowship headquarters building to celebrate his birthday (January 5), Paramahansa Yogananda said, "Many who are here now will be *jivanmuktas* in this lifetime, and some will be *siddhas*."

One who, because Self-realized and skillful, is able to live effectively without accumulating karmic impressions, has awakened to the stage of *jivanmukta* (*jiva*, soul; *mukta*, freedom) while embodied even though a residue of karma may yet have to be worked out, dissolved, or transcended. A *siddha* (one whose spiritual unfoldment is fully accomplished or perfected) is completely liberated because no longer influenced by past thoughts or actions.

Paramahansaji's primary interest was the spiritual awakening and liberation of souls. Although in his writings and public talks he encouraged people to honor all inspired religious traditions, to live together in harmony, and to nurture ideal world conditions, the major portion of his attention and energies was directed to assisting receptive disciples to Self-realization.

Several months before his transition, when talking with a few disciples, he told us, "I am no longer identified with the Yogananda personality; only God dwells in this body now. From now on, whatever I do will only be an act [a role played for the purpose of interacting with others and completing his mission]."

On another occasion, when a young male disciple began to complain about a personality conflict he was having with another disciple, Paramahansaji said, "Talk with him and together solve your problem. You shouldn't bother me about such matters. These days I am living more in the astral realms, helping souls there."

My guru did not come to America to establish a new religion

or to promote himself as a savior to be idolized or worshipped. He wanted everyone who was capable of understanding and applying what he taught to awaken from what he referred to as "the dream of mortality" and be as enlightened and freely functional as he was. Although he established an organization to extend and perpetuate his mission, he often said that souls were more important than institutions; that organized religious endeavors, if not enlivened by the Spirit of God and administered by selfless workers, were of little or no real value to individuals or to society.

During an early evening walk with my guru, at his desert retreat near Twenty Nine Palms, California, he told me, "You have much good karma, otherwise you would not be with me. Make the most of your opportunity [to know God]."

What Paramahansaji said to me, I now say to you: Your constructive tendencies—and the impulses of God's grace—have brought you to this kriya yoga path. Your continued dedication to right living and spiritual practice, and God's grace, will liberate you. Make the most of the opportunity you now have to fulfill your spiritual destiny.

From what are we to be liberated? The answer to that question is known when we are able to discern the cause of lack of Self-realization. If we are not Self-realized, it is because of unconsciously (or intentionally) identifying our awareness with the personality-self, a habit that reinforces the erroneous belief that we are other than spiritual beings—immortal, flawless expressions of the one Consciousness.

The purpose of knowledgeable, attentive yoga practice is to enable us to clearly know and experience the difference between ourselves as beings of pure consciousness and the mind and body through which we express.

Regular practice of *hatha yoga* routines strengthens and vitalizes the body, awakens dormant soul forces, and improves powers of concentration, enabling one to live more easily and

skillfully and to meditate effectively.

The cultivation of impersonal love of others and devotion to God (*bhakti yoga*) purifies the ego, expands consciousness, and results in conscious awareness of the reality of God.

Energetic, purposeful, selfless performance of necessary duties and chosen actions (*karma yoga*) provides opportunities to (1) work out karma, (2) avoid accumulating more karma, and (3) become aware of the fact that we are but agents of a Higher Power which is expressing through and around us.

Attentive practice of *jnana* ("gya-na") *yoga*, intellectual and intuitive analysis of our essential nature, the reality of God, and of how cosmic forces express, enables us to recognize, see through, and discard delusions and illusions.

Contemplative meditation (*raja yoga*), regularly practiced to the stage of superconsciousness is the direct way to Self-knowledge and God-realization. Effective practice of kriya yoga meditation techniques directs physical energies and astral life forces upward through the chakras, causing the meditator's attention to flow to the spiritual eye and crown chakra and withdraw awareness from the senses and from mental processes.

On the kriya yoga path, the way of dedicated performance of constructive actions, the most useful practices of all yoga systems are adapted to the personal needs of the devotee. The real meaning of *yoga*, emphasized in Patanjali's *yoga-sutras* and other basic texts, is *samadhi* (conscious realization of oneness, wholeness.) The procedures and techniques are only the means by which rapid, authentic spiritual growth that culminates in illumination of consciousness is facilitated.

Since the late 1960s, public awareness of and interest in yoga practices has vastly increased. A variety of versions of yoga practice are now being offered to appeal to various interests and to "acquire a share of the available market." A recent article in a national news magazine reported that eight million (an estimate based on research) people in the United States are believed to be

interested in, or are practicing, some form of yoga (hatha yoga having the most adherents because of its health-improving and stress-reduction benefits).

The characteristics of our basic mind-body constitution and personality were determined by our prevailing state of consciousness prior to physical birth, our subconscious conditionings or karma, the mind-body characteristics of our parents, and the various environmental circumstances that influenced us during our early childhood and young adult years. The body-mind constitution can be balanced by regulating the mental attitude, constructive behaviors, appropriate diet, and spiritual practices. Our personality can be refined and used as an appropriate medium through which to relate to the world. It should be remembered, however, that we are other than, and superior to, the characteristics of our mind-body constitution and personality.

Within you the light of knowledge of the reality of your true self in relationship to the Infinite ever shines, radiant and unchanging because innate to your being. Let the light of infallible knowledge lead you. Let it determine your choices of thinking and actions. It will illumine your path.

Note: To better understand your basic mind-body constitution, refer to my book *An Easy Guide to Ayurveda.* Apply the appropriate recommended regimens and routines to your personal needs.

Meditation is the [practice of] conscious awareness of the indwelling presence of God. It is the constant remembrance of the transcendental Spirit within our consciousness. God is revealed within us when our consciousness is made pure by liberating it from all concepts of duality and finitude.
– Lahiri Mahasaya –

The Shiva Samhita

Continued from the previous issue.

Chapter Two:
The Microcosm

Greek *mikros kosmos*, small world. In the *Shiva Samhita*, the author compares the human body to the universe—the *makros kosmos*, large world—with similar characteristics, cosmic forces, and actions.

1. In the physical body, the mount *Meru*—the spine—is surrounded by seven islands. There are rivers, seas, mountains, fields, and the lords of the fields also.

Meru is the name of a sequestered mountain abode, corresponding to Mount Olympus of Greek myth, imagined to be the dwelling place of Zeus and eleven other Olympian gods. To yogis, the gods (soul forces and powers) reside in the *chakras* (vital centers) in the spine and express through the *nadis* (channels) through which vital forces flow. The islands, rivers, mountains, and fields are the various characteristics of the astral and physical bodies with functions governed by influences (lords) impelled by the soul.

2. Seers and sages are in it, and all the stars and planets, and sacred pilgrimage sites, shrines, and presiding deities of the shrines.

Seers and *sages* represent the innate knowledge of consciousness. Yogis say that all that appears in the outer universe is within us; that it is possible, by subjective, meditative contemplation, to perceive phenomena ordinarily considered to be objective as though within one's field of awareness. The sacred pilgrimage

sites and shrines are the vital centers in the spine, spiritual eye, and crown *chakra* with indwelling deities (powers directed by innate intelligence.)

While one may enjoy and even derive benefit from visiting places considered to be holy because of their having been sanctified by the presence of saints, yogis who are intent upon Self-realization meditatively direct their attention to and worship the inner sacred places, the *chakras* and higher centers in the brain. Instead of contemplating external symbols (such as *yantras*, artistically rendered geometrical designs that indicate cosmic processes and the actions of consciousness which empower them), they contemplate the inner lights of the *tattwas*, the subtle "true essences" of the cosmic elements manifesting as *prana* frequencies in the five lower *chakras*.

3. The sun and moon, agents of creation and dissolution, also move in it. Ether, air, fire, water, and earth are also there.

The "sun" and the "moon" influences active in the spinal pathway are described in some of the following verses. The subtle ether (space with cosmic forces with potential to express), air, fire, water, and earth characteristics are related to the *chakras* in proximity to the cervical, dorsal, lumbar, sacral, and coccygeal regions of the spine.

4. All the beings existing in the three worlds are in the body. In the spinal column they are engaged in their respective functions.

Intelligence-directed forces expressive in the fine causal, subtle astral, and gross matter realms are likewise expressive in the body and can be apprehended.

5. Ordinary people do not know these things. One who knows all this is a yogi; there is no doubt about it.

6. In this body, above the spinal cord, is the nectar-rayed moon.

Soul forces enter the body through the medulla oblongata, the nerve tissue at the base of the brain that regulates respiration, circulation, and various other functions of the body. From there it flows into the higher brain where resides the *sahasrara chakra*, the "thousand petalled lotus" (vital center radiating numberless currents of life force) which connects the brain with higher planes of consciousness. In portraits of saints, this *chakra* is sometimes depicted as a halo of light around the head, indicating mental illumination and awakened consciousness that is no longer confined to the brain. The pure essence of consciousness is referred to as ambrosia, the nectar of the gods which energizes the mind, nourishes the body and, when flowing freely, confers long, healthy, physical life and realization of immortality.

7. This has its face downwards, and rains nectar day and night. The ambrosia further subdivides into two subtle parts.

8. One of these, through the channel named *ida*, goes through the body to nourish it, like the waters of the heavenly Ganges [river].

9. This milk-ray [current of moon-like force] is on the left side. The other [current of sun-like force], brilliant and a fountain of great joy, enters through the middle path [*sushumna*] in the spinal canal to create this moon [lunar current].

10. At the bottom of the spine is the sun [*kundalini*, the reservoir of soul force with potential to express dual aspects in the six lower *chakras*]. In the right path [*pingala*] the lord of creatures carries the fluid [vital force] through its rays upwards.

11. It swallows the vital secretions and ray-exuded nectar. The sun, together with its atmosphere [gaseous matters and aspects of life force or *prana* in proximity to it], moves through the whole body.

12. The right-side vessel [*pingala*] is the giver of *nirvana* [enlightenment, realized when the sense of independent selfhood is extinguished]. The lord of creation and of dissolution [the sun] moves in this vessel through auspicious places [the five lower *chakras*].

The downward flowing vital force which causes soul awareness to identify with the mind, senses, and physical body, expresses as two currents of life force. *Ida* (the moon current) is characterized as having gentle, soft, nourishing (like milk), actions described as feminine. *Pingala* (the sun current) is characterized as having assertive, transformative actions described as masculine. When acting to effect metabolic and psychological transformations, it is said to swallow or consume some of the vital forces.

13.-14. There are countless numbers of *nadis*. Of them, fourteen are the principles ones: *ida*, *pingala*, *sushumna*, and others which are spread throughout the body.

15.-16. Among these, *ida*, *pingala*, and *sushumna* are the main ones. Of these three, *sushumna* alone is the highest, and is beloved of all yogis. The others are subordinate to it.

17. These three *nadis* have their mouths downward and are like thin threads of a lotus. Supported by the vertebral column, they represent the moon, sun, and fire.

Through *sushumna nadi*, the astral tube-like channel between the left and right channels formed of energy confined by a mild magnetic field, the fire of *kundalini* spontaneously flows after it has been awakened. The creative energy (*shakti*) of *kundalini* enlivens the *chakras*, causing them to more obviously manifest their characteristic sound and light frequencies, perceived during contemplative meditation, and facilitating psychological transformations and unfoldments of superconsciousness.

The practice of *kriya pranayama* moves soul forces upward through spine to the brain, effortlessly withdrawing the meditator's attention from mental involvements and focusing it in the spiritual eye and crown *chakra*.

18.-20. Within it [*sushumna*] is *chitra*; it is my beloved. In it, is the subtlest pathway, *Brahma nadi*. Brilliant with five colors, pure, in the

middle of *sushumna*, *chitra* is the vital part of the body. This has been called in the scriptures The Heavenly Way. It is the giver of immortality. By contemplating [in] it, the accomplished yogi destroys all errors.

Vajra nadi (not mentioned in the above verses) and *chitra nadi* form the spine of the astral body which interpenetrates the physical body. *Brahma nadi*, so-named because it carries pure God (*Brahma*) force, is the causal spine formed of fine energies of consciousness. The five colors of *chitra nadi* represent the five *prana* frequencies. When the meditator's awareness moves through *chitra nadi*, subtle heaven-like astral perceptions may be experienced, some of which, while perhaps fascinating to behold, may be illusory. Illusory perceptions may occur because superconsciousness is still mixed with thought processes or because some regions of the brain, stimulated by flows of *prana*, may produce auditory and visual hallucinations. When awareness moves through *Brahma nadi*, refined levels of superconsciousness and transcendent perceptions are experienced and delusions and illusions are banished. When soul awareness is confined to the *chakra* at the base of the spine, strong identification with the physical body and sensory perceptions prevails. When the meditator's awareness is related to the sacral *chakra*, access to *chitra nadi* and its corresponding characteristics is possible. When the devotee's awareness is related to the lumbar *chakra*, access to *Brahma nadi* and its characteristics is possible.

The Pelvic Region

21. At the base of the spine is the *adhara* [supporting] lotus.

The *chakras* are referred to as lotuses, symbols of potential unfoldment. When one is egocentric and awareness is confined to mental and physical processes, the currents [petals] of *prana* in the *chakras* are directed downward. When soul forces flow toward the spiritual eye and crown *chakra*, the currents of *prana* are directed upward.

22. Within this lotus [*chakra*] is the triangular, beautiful *yoni*, hidden and kept secret by all the *tantras*.

The secular meaning of *yoni* is "the passageway through which one is physically born into the world." Yogis use the word to refer to inner openings through which life force and awareness can move. The *tantras* are a collection of books in which cosmic forces, their actions, and how to relate to them are described. *Tantric* teachers often give symbolic meanings to commonly used words for the purpose of conveying esoteric information only to persons who have been initiated into special yogic practices and will use them for higher purposes.

23. In it is the supreme goddess *kundalini* like electricity, with three and a half coils [like a serpent], in the mouth of *sushumna*.

24. It represents the creative force of the world and is always engaged in creation. It is the goddess of speech whom speech cannot manifest and is praised by all the gods.

Shiva is the name given to pure consciousness in the crown *chakra*. *Kundalini shakti*, is referred to as a goddess-like feminine consort of pure consciousness.

25. The *ida nadi* is on the left side, coiling around the *sushumna* and goes to the left nostril.

26. The *pingala nadi* is on the right side, coiling around the central vessel and goes to the right nostril.

When the flow of the lunar (*ida*) current is dominant, the right hemisphere of the brain is more active and one is inclined to be introverted, reflective, passive, and indecisive. When the solar (*pingala*) current is dominant, the left hemisphere of the brain is more active and one is inclined to be outer directed, goal oriented, intellectually discerning, and decisive. In a healthy person, the dominant flows of lunar and solar currents alternate

approximately every two hours throughout the day and night, influencing metabolic functions and somewhat contributing to mild mental and emotional changes. When the lunar current is dominant, air flows more freely through the left nostril. When the solar current is dominant, air flows more freely through the right nostril. By breathing through either the left or right nostril (by closing the opposite nostril with a finger), these currents can be regulated. When *prana* flows are dominant in the *sushumna* canal, the flows of lunar and solar currents are balanced and diminished, resulting in mental calmness and clarity, improved concentration, and emotional stability. Air then flows with equal, mild force through both nostrils. *Kriya pranayama* causes life forces to immediately flow through *sushumna*.

27. Between *ida* and *pingala* is *sushumna nadi*, with six stages and six forces which are known to yogis.

28. The first five stages of *sushumna nadi* are known by various names and are revealed in this book.

The "six stages" of the *sushumna* canal are the five lower *chakras* and the medulla oblongata—the light of which may be reflected in the spiritual eye when concentration is steady.

29. The other *nadis* arising from the base *chakra* go to various parts of the body.

30. From these arise other branches and subbranches, supplying their respective places [with vitalizing life force].

31. These, spread throughout the body, are vehicles of sensation and regulate the movements of *prana*.

32. Situated in the abdominal region is the digestive fire, in the sphere of the sun [the lumbar *chakra*] which has twelve rays [radiating currents]. Know this as the fire of *Vaiswanara* [the power of assimilation] born from a portion of my own energy.

33. This fire increases life, gives strength and nourishment, energizes the body, destroys all diseases, and imparts the radiance of health.

34. The wise yogi, having kindled this fire by proper rites, should sacrifice food into it daily.

The food transformation "fire" is enlivened by practicing *hatha yoga asanas* (postures) and certain *pranayamas* and *mudras* that act directly on the *lumbar chakra*. *Uddiyana bandha* (the stomach lift and its supplemental movements) is also recommended for this purpose. Food, which should be considered as an offering of nourishment to the body, is processed more efficiently when solar current influences are pronounced. According to Ayurvedic texts, the six stages of food transformation are plasma, blood, muscle, fat, bone, reproductive essences, and *ojas* (the finest essence of consciousness and matter which strengthens the body's immune system, slows biological aging, imparts the glow of health, and enlivens and transforms the brain and nervous system.) *Ojas* is also increased in the body and mind by idealistic thinking, aspiration to spiritual growth, emotional stability, prayer, meditation to the stage of superconsciousness and there residing, and transcendent realizations.

35. [The functions of] this body, the microcosm, with its many parts, should be understood.

36. Various are their places and names, all of which cannot be fully described here.

37. In the body dwells the soul, all-pervading, adorned with a garland of endless desires and attached to the body by *karma*.

As God pervades the universe, so the soul pervades the physical body. The unenlightened soul is attached to the body because of habit and the influences of subconscious tendencies which cause delusions (erroneous beliefs) and illusions (errors in perception). To be liberated, the three primary obstacles the mind-body iden-

tified soul must overcome are (1) attachment to material things; (2) attachment to perceptions and sensations, even those which are appealing to us and evoke inspiration; (3) attachment to self-consciousness, the illusional sense of independent existence.

Attachment to material things is easily renounced when soul consciousness is established at the heart (dorsal) *chakra*. Attachment to perceptions is easily overcome when soul consciousness is established at the cervical *chakra*. Attachment to self-consciousness is eliminated when soul consciousness is established at the spiritual eye and crown *chakra*. Prior to awakening to these stages of spiritual awareness, attachments can be weakened and renounced by intellectual discernment and by viewing objective circumstances and events dispassionately (without irrational emotional involvement with or dependency on outer conditions). Material things can be wisely used, perceptions and sensations can be enjoyed without attachments to them, and ego-sense can be purified. What is to be remembered is that we are other than that which is perceived.

38. The soul, possessed of many qualities and the agent of all events, enjoys the fruits [results or effects] of the various *karmic* influences accumulated in the past.

The word origin of *karma* (and of *kriya*) is the Sanskrit verb-root *kri*, to do, to act, to make (happen), to cause effects.

39. Whatever is seen, whether pleasurable or painful, is the effect of *karma* [causative influences]. All creatures enjoy or suffer according to the results of their actions.

40. Desires which cause pleasure or pain express according to the *karma* accumulated in the past by the soul.

41. The soul that has accumulated an excess of good *karma* because of virtuous actions experiences a happy life. In this world good fortune unfolds without any difficulty.

42. In proportion to the force of *karma*, one enjoys pleasure or suffers misery. The soul that has accumulated an excess of pain-causing *karma* does not remain peaceful. *Karma*, the law of causation, prevails in this world. From the Supreme Intelligence veiled by *maya* [primary nature] all things have been emanated.

43. As in their proper season, various creatures are born to experience the consequences of their *karma*, as because of an error in perception a pearl shell is mistaken for silver, so because of the taint of *karma* the soul erroneously presumes the universe to have independent existence instead of knowing it to be a manifestation of cosmic forces emanating from the field of God's consciousness.

44. From desire, all these delusions arise. They are difficult for the average person to eradicate. When the salvation-giving knowledge of the unreality of the world arises, desires are vanquished.

45. When engrossed in the manifested [objective] world, delusion prevails. There is no other cause of this delusion. I tell you the truth.

46. Delusion is vanquished when the Cause of the worlds is known. It prevails so long as one thinks "God does not exist."

47. By carefully examining the true nature of consciousness and the processes of world manifestation, false knowledge vanishes. It cannot be removed by any other means.

48. As long as knowledge of the cause of the universe does not arise, all things will appear to be separate and diverse.

49. When this body, acquired by *karma*, is made the means of obtaining *nirvana*, then only does the soul's identification with the body become [constructively] fruitful, but not otherwise.

50. Of whatever the nature of the original desire that clings to the soul through various incarnations, similar is the delusion which it suffers according to its actions.

51. If the practitioner of yoga wishes to cross the ocean of this world, all duties relating to living in this world should be performed without

attachment to the results of actions.

52. Persons attached to objects and desirous of sensual pleasures descend from the path of *nirvana* by excessively engaging in delusional talk and performing pain-causing actions.

53. When, because of having perceived the true Self, a person does not see anything in this world [as being independent of that which manifested it], no error is committed if ritual actions [outer modes of worship] are renounced. This is my opinion.

54. All desires [and all other pain- or trouble-causing conditions] are dissolved by true [Self-revealed] knowledge alone, and not otherwise. When all minor subtle essences [cosmic forces which influence physical processes and psychological states and the *gunas*, the attributes of consciousness which regulate cosmic forces] cease to be influential, the One Reality [spontaneously] becomes manifest.

The soul, an individualized portion of the one, self-existent Consciousness, is ever pure. It is not tainted by the processes of nature. When the physical body is refined and soul awareness is no longer confined by subconscious influences, delusions, or illusions, the innate impulse to be fully awake prevails. The reality of Supreme Consciousness is then Self-revealed.

– to be continued

Note: To supplement your studies, read *Life Surrendered in God* (with my commentary on Patanjali's *yoga-sutras*) and *The Eternal Way*: The Inner Meaning of the Bhagavad Gita.

Dialogue

Kriya Yoga Philosophy, Traditions, and Practices

Your participation is invited. Use the form provided with each issue.

Q. I am presently engaged in intensive spiritual practices. I meditate twice a day for an hour or more and endeavor to be aware of my relationship with God all the time. However, I notice that I am sometimes more impatient with others that is usual for me to be. I also feel more aggressive, and feelings of anger often arise. I wonder why this happens, and if others have similar experiences?

We may be impatient with others because they may not seem to be as focused on "important" matters as we are (or would like to be). Or it may be that we are projecting our dissatisfaction with ourselves or our circumstances, are tired, or are stressed because of unresolved personal problems. Also, intensive meditation practice may open the door to the unconscious, allowing psychological conflicts and frustrations to become more evident and expressive. After meditation practice, endeavor to remain soul-centered and peaceful. Avoid being judgmental. Treat everyone with respectful kindness and silently acknowledge their innate divine nature.

Q. What trends to you see in the field of scientific investigation as we move into the next century, and beyond?

I see continuing discoveries of the subtle processes of nature which will be used in practical ways to improve the quality of life of more people. Scientists who pursue their quest for knowledge with pure motives and an open mind will ultimately acquire insight into consciousness as the basis of all objective phenomena.

Q. What is meant by the statement that by "offering the inhaling breath into the exhaling breath" the yogi neutralizes both breaths, thus releasing life force from the heart and bringing it under the practitioner's conscious control?

Your question is in reference to the words attributed to Krishna while speaking to Arjuna (Bhagavad Gita 4:29). Referring to this verse in his book *Autobiography of a Yogi* (Chapter 26, The Science of Kriya Yoga) Paramahansa Yogananda wrote: "The yogi arrests decay in the body by securing an additional supply of prana [life force] through quieting the actions of the lungs and heart; [and] arrests mutations of growth in the body by control of *apana* [eliminating current]. Thus neutralizing decay and growth [in the body], the yogi learns life-force control." Paramahansaji often quoted this verse in the Bhagavad Gita when speaking of the effectiveness of kriya pranayama practice.

Soul force in the body has five influential aspects. *Prana* (*pra*, forth; *an*, to breath) is instrumental when inhaling air. *Apana* (*apa*, away; *an*, to breathe) is instrumental when exhaling and in casting out waste products from the body. *Vyana* (*vi*, apart; *a*, towards; *an*, to breathe) governs the circulation of fluids and other substances in the body, resists biological decay, and contributes to overall well-being. *Samana* (*sama*, equal; *an*, to breathe) regulates digestion, assimilation, and biochemical transformations and aids in balancing the functions of all physical systems. *Udana* (*ud*, up; *a*, toward; *an*, to breathe) directs vital forces upward.

Kriya pranayama practice elicits relaxation, removes carbon from the blood, harmonizes flows of vital forces, and reduces the body's dependency on air. Breathing becomes slow and refined and the mind and emotions are calmed, allowing superconscious states to more easily be experienced.

Q. In the October-December issue of *Radiance*, mention was made of the goddess Lakshmi and of a mantra for prosperity. Can this mantra be published or does it have to be imparted in person? I could use some prosperity in my life at this time.

In Vedic literature, Lakshmi is the name used to refer to creative forces that, when freely flowing, contribute to one's prosperity—a condition of thriving and flourishing. I would gladly provide you with the mantra if I knew it. There is nothing magical about mantra recitation for specific purposes. Aspiration—supported by right actions—that increases one's capacity to be open to the flow of good fortune is the way to ensure prosperity, as it is the way to ensure the fulfillment of any desire. If using a mantra empowers aspiration, clears our awareness, and motivates us to right action, it can be useful. A well-defined affirmation of your own composition will be equally effective.

Q. Sometimes, when doing kriya pranayamas, my head involuntarily moves in a figure eight motion and continues for a time. After a few more kriya pranayamas, it does this again. What causes this to occur? Also, what about the spontaneous, sudden movements that I occasionally experience?

When meditating, it is recommended that one be poised and still. Now and then it is all right to allow bodily movements that contribute to relaxation and physical comfort. Flow your attention more inward and the tendency for your head to move should cease. Sudden movements of the body when meditating (or at other times) may be due to release of stress or to the actions of shakti that spontaneously occur. As you become more relaxed, these occurrences should diminish in frequency and in intensity.

Q. Is *hong-sau* the personal mantra of every kriya yoga initiate?

The gurus in our lineage taught (and teach) *hong-sau* mantra as a meditation technique for beginning meditators. So-ham mantra may also be used, practiced in the same way (listened to in accord with the natural flows of breathing). Paramahansaji (and all of the gurus) also taught other mantras from time to time, and other meditation techniques.

Q. How many hours should one practice kriya pranayama at a rate of four to six a minute? Is there a reason for counting them?

Four kriya pranayamas a minute is 120 in thirty minutes, which is adequate for most devotees. Allowing time for meditating in the silence after kriya pranayama practice, and for practicing *jyoti mudra* and again meditating, at least one hour is needed. Counting, using the fingers or a string of beads, is helpful to enable one to adhere to a chosen schedule. During longer meditation sessions, there is no need to count; do as many as you feel comfortable doing, without straining, then sit for an extended duration of time in the after-effects tranquility produced by your pranayama practice.

Q. I have seen photos of some yogis in India sitting on tiger skins. Isn't this contrary to the ideal of *ahimsa*, harmlessness?

Although not commonly done today, some yogis have been known to sit on an animal skin to protect the body from dampness or coldness. Some also say that animal skins (and silk) insulate the body's electromagnetic field from magnetic forces in the earth. Yogis who use animal skins, for whatever purpose, do not condone killing. If an animal has died of natural causes or because of an accident, the use of its hide is generally considered to be acceptable.

Q. After thirty years of meditation practice I feel some despair. I've never experienced inner light perception while meditating, just peace and calmness. Generally, life goes well. Are my expectations too high? Another problem is that of having devotion to God. How can devotion be felt for an entity which is so far removed from us?

Paramahansaji often said that peace and calmness are more beneficial than light perceptions. The real purpose of meditation practice is to quiet the mind so that we can be aware of ourselves as beings of pure consciousness. If you are living more effectively

and events and circumstances are unfolding in supportive ways, you are on the right track. If your understanding of God as the only existing, all-pervading field of consciousness is not yet sufficient to enable you to feel that you have a relationship with it, have devotion to the ideal of being Self-realized, and nurture your aspiration to awaken to knowledge and experience of the truth of yourself as a unit of the ocean of consciousness. The notion that God is an entity distant from you will dissolve when you more clearly comprehend what God really is.

Q. Paramahansa Yogananda has written of his perception of the spiritual eye as revolving. Please explain.

When the mind is calm, the reflected light of the medulla oblongata at the base of the brain is perceived in the spiritual eye (*ajna chakra*) between the eyebrows. When concentration wavers, the light may appear to be fragmented or distorted. Surging (even revolving) movements of light may also be perceived in the spiritual eye. By gazing into and through the spiritual eye, a gold, blue, or white light may be perceived. Some see a gold orb with a blue field in it which has a brilliant white center. Some see a tunnel of light through which they endeavor to project their awareness. Gold is considered to be the color frequency of the Om vibration; blue represents consciousness pervading the manifest realms (sometimes referred to as Krishna consciousness by Hindus and Christ consciousness by Christians); white represents the light of manifesting consciousness which is not qualified. The Absolute, or Field of Pure Consciousness, is devoid of characteristics.

Q. I would like to know more about modes of formal worship: ritual practices, contemplation of yantras and mandalas, and the use of various art forms such as paintings and sculpture.

Ritual practices, performed with knowledge of what is to be accomplished and with conscious intention, can be used to

improve concentration, elicit superconscious states, and invite beneficial influences into the environment. For kriya yoga devotees, ritual actions such as acknowledging one's guru (and the lineage of gurus) and lighting a candle on the alter before sitting to meditate, can be helpful. Reverently performed, these simple actions calm the mind and awaken soul qualities.

Yantras (geometrical designs having symbolic significance) and *mandalas* (Sanskrit *mandalam*, circle, often a drawing or painting symbolizing the universe and its varied aspects) may also be used for focusing attention and contemplating the esoteric (inner) meanings of the designs. A favorite yantra of many yogis is Sri Yantra. (Sanskrit *Sri* [shree], excellent, venerated, splendid, to flame, to diffuse or pour out light. As a noun it means "wealth.")

The Sri Yantra has interlaced triangles in a circle enclosed in a square. The triangles with the point down indicate the descent of Spirit into matter. The triangles with the point upward indicate Spirit flowing from matter to the field of pure consciousness, the Absolute. The lines and embellishments included in the design indicate aspects of the cosmos. By understanding the symbolism and contemplating it, one is reminded of (and acquires insight into) the categories and processes of cosmic manifestation.

Artistic creations that evoke *sattvic* (pure, refined, consciousness-purifying and expanding) thoughts and moods can be useful to our higher purposes.

Superstitious reliance upon ritual actions or mechanical performance of them, or dependence upon external objects should be avoided. The "fire ceremony" preferred by kriya yogis is performed by practicing kriya pranayama (and experiencing spontaneous soul awakening processes) which burns delusions and illusions and dissolves the sense of independent selfhood in the flame of devotion and the transforming fire of kundalini.

When using formal modes of worship, start with them, then

go inward and contemplate transcendent realities.

Q. I have noticed that you use different hand positions when blessing individuals at the kriya initiation services. Does this have any significance? Also, mention again what Paramahansa said about his blessing of devotees when he initiated them?

The placement of my hand, whether with my fingers or thumb at their spiritual eye or with the palm of my hand on their forehead is just the way it happens to occur.

When Paramahansaji blessed disciples after instructing them in kriya meditation practices, he explained that he was putting his light (his shakti or creative energy) into them to awaken their soul qualities. He said, "I give you everything; you have to be receptive to receiving it."

Q. In the October-December issue of *Radiance* (page 4) you tell a story indicating that your guru misread your thoughts; therefore, I presume that [spiritual] masters also sometimes make mistakes. Do you agree?

I don't think that Paramahansaji misread my thoughts or intentions. Many times, his words and actions indicated that he knew everything about me. The story I told involved another person who had, with good intentions, informed my guru of his own concern about me. It was he who misunderstood. I think Paramahansaji wrote the note to me to complete the cycle of communication (or to eliminate the possibility of misunderstanding) and to remind me of the importance of unwavering commitment to the discipleship path. That was also during the phase of his life, a year or two before he passed, when, as he said, he was "doing some housecleaning"—being more confrontational with some disciples to encourage them to either more obviously demonstrate their commitment to discipleship and to the ideals and purposes of the organization, or leave.

Like anyone else, when functioning at an "outer consciousness level," even an enlightened person can make intellectual

errors and intuition may be flawed. What confers redemptive benefits to us in our relationship with a guru is not the guru's personality characteristics, but his or her inner state of realization and the transmission of spiritual force.

Q. You (and others) mention in your writings that, to progress spiritually and awaken to enlightenment, it is necessary to remove attachments to destructive and self-centered behaviors. What do we have to do to accomplish this?

Attachment to destructive behaviors—such as pessimism, moodiness, laziness, faultfinding, gossip, irregular or inattentive performance of duties, improper eating or overeating, dependence upon drugs or stimulants, frequent or constant social interaction with others who are addicted to self-defeating behaviors, and avoidance of spiritual practices—contributes to mental and emotional confusion, clouds awareness, and keeps us attuned to *rajasic* (constantly moving) and *tamasic* (heavy, awareness-darkening) influences in nature. We have to remove our awareness from egocentric involvements and be established in superconsciousness. This can be done by exercising freedom of choice, firm determination, implementing constructive behaviors, and regular practice of meditation.

Q. When we are engaged in intensive study and meditation practice, what are some of the lifestyle regimens that will be supportive of us?

Avoidance of self-centered behaviors (see above), cultivation of sattvic behaviors, a balanced schedule of activity and rest, and good nutrition. In your daily diet, include a modest quantity of some nourishing foods recommended in Ayurvedic literature. (Read *An Easy Guide to Ayurveda.*)

Expand your awareness. Cultivate cosmic consciousness. Improve your understanding of how the One Consciousness expresses as the universe without being confined by it. You will then be able to live in the world without having your awareness

limited to it.

Be focused, with unwavering resolve, yet patient. In his book *The Holy Science* Sri Yukteswar defined patience as soul contentment in the midst of all circumstances (which is not the same as mental or emotional satisfaction *because* of circumstances), the second of the five *niyamas* ("not-restraints" or intentional practices) of yoga.

We can be established in conviction that we are immortal, spiritual beings while we are intent on awakening to conscious realization of this fact. When we know that we are spiritual beings, knowledge that our mind, body, and personality characteristics are temporary is also present. The mind is to be purified and illumined; the body is to be refined and enlivened; and the personality is to be transformed. The true Self of us is already flawless—remember this when you meditate. You are not meditating to improve upon your essential nature; you are meditating to remove your awareness from mental and physical characteristics which restrict it.

Use your powers of intellectual determination to discern the difference between your true Self and transient thoughts, moods, and physical sensations. When meditating, use the kriya meditation techniques to remove your awareness from thoughts, moods, and physical sensations.

The various aspects of yoga discipline are so intimately integrated that by ignoring one of them, the devotee will find it difficult to practice the others.
– Sri Yukteswar –

Addendum

Our Responsiveness to Grace Assures Our Salvation

Salvation is the spiritual condition of having been saved or delivered from misfortune and from the possibility of experiencing misfortune in the future because of one's thoughts or actions prior to spiritual awakening. Although there is much that we can do to help ourselves awaken to the free state, our endeavors, while necessary, are limited. When we are sufficiently aware to be responsive to the enlivening and transformative impulses of grace which are expressive within and around us, our salvation is assured.

Before we are established in the state of soul freedom while embodied, which usually precedes the fully liberated state, we can prepare to awaken to it by regular practice of superconscious meditation and right living. Regular practice of superconscious meditation provides direct experience of transcendent realities, contributes to psychological transformations, and refines the nervous system. Right living enables us to apprehend and learn to cooperate with the laws of nature, fulfill our desires, and skillfully express our abilities. *Skillful living is yoga practice* because it enables us to consciously experience our relationship with the whole of creation and to successfully play our role in life. To live effectively we have to be grounded in Self- and God-awareness and knowledge that spontaneously unfolds when we repeatedly meditate to the stage of superconsciousness.

In an earlier issue of *Radiance* (and in *Surrendered Love, Redeeming Grace*) I described my experience of extended illness in my eighteenth year and, after reading *Autobiography a Yogi*, making a commitment to a life of spiritual service. At that time—I knew, and Paramahansaji told me during a private conversation a few months after he accepted me for discipleship train-

ing—I started a new incarnation; my life until then being somewhat determined by karma (past causes). My life is now lived without any karmic compulsion; only my perceptions of possibilities, willingness to serve, actions of the moment, and God's grace determine it.

I recommend that you live like this. You can, if you choose to do so. Instead of allowing your past thoughts, desires, and actions (known or unknown to you) to determine your experiences and circumstances, live as a free soul, neither mentally nor emotionally attached to your actions or their results. Your near and future experiences and circumstances will then be determined by your states of consciousness, mental states, wisely performed actions, and grace. As your illusional sense of selfhood diminishes, God's fulfilling, redemptive grace will more obviously and generously provide your every need, order and govern your life, and unveil your innate knowledge.

If you have secular duties and personal responsibilities, cheerfully and efficiently attend to them while knowing that doing so is not the real purpose for your being in this world. They are but incidental obligations to fulfill. Don't live only to earn money, be entertained, pay off the mortgage, put your children through school, ensure your needs in your latter years on Earth, and maintain emotionally satisfying family and social relationships. Improve your awareness of your relationship with the Infinite. Look far beyond your present circumstances to what lies ahead of you. Continue to grow spiritually and remain unwavering in your dedication to the fulfillment of your soul destiny. Don't think of yourself as a mere human creature; acknowledge your divine nature and live from that level of understanding.

Above all, persist! Until fully enlightened, even highly Self-realized souls can wander from the path of light and return to former habitual ways of thinking and behaving. Through the years, I have known several devotees who started on the spiritual path with enthusiasm, made quick progress for a few months

or years, then lost interest in their practices. Others I have known, after a few months or years of spiritual practice allowed their attention to be distracted, became attached to their illusions, yielded to the lure of a seemingly more glamorous but inferior path, chose to remain egotistical (arrogant and self-centered), were resistant to growing to emotional maturity, or mistakenly presumed themselves to be "advanced" when, in fact, they had experienced only a minor adjustment of viewpoint.

Even if it seems to you that you have reached the limit of your spiritual growth potential, hold on to that level of awareness. Do not give up. Refuse to allow thoughts and feelings of despair to disturb your soul peace. You are "made in the image and likeness of God." Think, feel, and act like the divine being you are; you will definitely experience more growth. Let your soulful offering to the Infinite be the doing of the very best of which you are capable. More is not expected of you; less should not be acceptable to you.

If you are not yet enlightened, ask yourself these questions—and answer them—in the sanctuary of your being:

- Is your present aspiration to be Self- and God-realized weak, mild, or intense?
- Do you fairly burn with devotional ardor?
- Do you believe it is possible for you to be Self-realized?
- What are you willing to do to be an accomplished (fully awake and effectively functional) devotee of God?
- What are you doing now to make your spiritual growth possible, easier, and quicker?

As an initiate in this kriya yoga tradition, you are on the right path. You are not alone in the cosmos.

- The grace of God through the line of gurus constantly flows to you.

- Your extended spiritual family of kriya yoga brothers and sisters in this and other realms share your aspirations and support your right endeavors.
- You are being loved, prayed for, encouraged, and blessed beyond measure.
- Until your last breath if need be, be firmly resolved to be fully awake this incarnation.
- If you are now awake, help others to awaken.

We can help others to awaken spiritually by always being fully aware of our real nature and living up to our highest potential. We cannot effectively help anyone until we are knowledgeable and competent. We cannot share what we do not have. Saturate your mind with the fundamental philosophical principles upon which the path of kriya yoga is based and live in accord with them. Whatever is supportive of your highest good and contributes to spiritual growth, accept. Whatever clouds your awareness, complicates your life, or restricts your soul freedom, avoid. Wisely exercise your freedom to choose. Be strong, insightful and decisive.

Seminar and Meditation Retreat Opportunities

Meditation seminars are scheduled this year in several North American cities and Europe. Participate in the program which is convenient to you. If possible, come to CSA headquarters for a meditation retreat this summer. During the week long retreats I will schedule a few private sessions with kriya yoga initiates who are here.

Special Days for Meditation
During the Month of March

Mark March 7 and 9 on your calendar and meditate with special emphasis on those days. March 7, 1998 is the forty-sixth anniversary of Paramahansa Yogananda's *maha*, great; *samadhi*, oneness. Paramahansaji's guru, Sri Yukteswar, left his body on March 9, 1936 (my fifth birthday). Although it is customary to remember both the date of birth and of transition of enlightened teachers from the physical world, the latter anniversary is considered to be the most auspicious for meditation purposes. On the appropriate day, in your meditation sanctuary light a candle before a picture of the guru whose life is being respectfully remembered. Pray that you, too, may always be awake in God, then meditate in the silence.

If you are a CSA meditation group facilitator, invite kriya initiates to meditate with you on one of these days. Since the dates are so close together, for group sessions both anniversaries can be observed on either day.

A Kriya Yoga Meditation Group
To Meet Weekly in Phoenix, Arizona

If you would like to participate in a one-hour kriya yoga meditation group that will meet once a week, facilitated by Derek Pratt, contact Dan Hart: phone (602) 840-1356. Both of these kriya representatives are former members of the SRF monastic order. I met Dan a few years ago, during a Phoenix lecture-visit, and we have regularly corresponded since then. Organized activities are not planned; just a weekly gathering of kriya devotees who will meditate together.

Radiance

A Forum for Kriya Yoga Initiates
April – June 1998 Number 16

AWAKENING TO THAT WHICH IS REAL

Mere perceptions, or pleasant moods and sensations that may be experienced, do not satisfy the soul. Only clear, unchanging awareness of pure being provides us permanent peace and liberates our consciousness.

Light Through the Ages

THE SHIVA SAMHITA

An examination of a primary source of information on the philosophy and practices of Yoga. A continuing series.

Dialogue

PHILOSOPHY, TRADITIONS & PRACTICES

Open discussion. Reader participation invited.

The senses, some say, are superior. [In truth] superior to the senses is the mind; superior to the mind is the intellect; superior to the intellect is the Self. Thus, knowing this, sustaining Self awareness by Self-knowledge, eliminate the obstacle of insistent desire [that is often so difficult to overcome].

– Bhagavad Gita 3.42,43 –

Meditation is [having] conscious awareness of the presence of God within us. God is revealed within us when our awareness is made pure by liberating it from all concepts of duality and finitude.

– Lahiri Mahasaya –

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If you have friends or associates who are kriya yoga initiates, ask them if they read (or know about) this magazine. If they do not already receive it, loan them a copy and provide them with information about how to subscribe.

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Awakening to That Which is Real

Perception—whether by sight, smell, taste, hearing, touch, or intuitive apprehension—requires a perceiver and an object of perception. A perception is an experience, not a realization. Perceptions are recorded in the subconscious level of the mind as memories (Sanskrit *samskaras*).

Memories have value: they provide us a sense of history and an awareness of where we have been and what we have experienced, and enable us to accumulate knowledge that can used in practical ways. They can also be restrictive. Subconscious impressions of unpleasant or traumatic events, if allowed to be influential, may be the cause of unhappiness, mental depression, emotional conflict, fearfulness, or dysfunctional behaviors. While memories of pleasant events, if obsessively cherished may be debilitating, they can inspire us to live enjoyably in the present and to anticipate possibilities of happiness.

When in the self- (ego) conscious state, we tend to rely on sense perceptions to support our concept of ourselves and to provide us a degree of satisfaction. Our perception of happiness and well-being is then dependent upon prevailing events and circumstances. If our subjective states (internal perceptions, thoughts, and moods) and external conditions are agreeable to us, we tend to be happy; if they are unsatisfying, we tend to be unhappy. We are inclined to react rather than to be responsive and adaptable; to be influenced rather than to be motivated to create desired effects by soul-determined choices and actions. When our awareness is confined to the senses and to conditioned mental states, we tend to assume the role of being a victim of our memories and circumstances and to believe them to be beyond our control.

A healthy-minded, functional self-conscious state of awareness (which is of value because it allows self-determined choices and enables spiritual growth to be accomplished more easily) is

still egocentric, therefore, confined and limited. Because only clear, unchanging awareness of pure being which is not dependent upon perceptions can provide permanent peace and liberate consciousness, devotees of God should aspire to awaken to Self-realization as quickly as possible.

The true nature of the Self can be quickly realized by: (1) discerning the difference between you as the Self which perceives and ordinary, disordered states of awareness; (2) calming the subliminal impulses (*vasanas*) which cause mental transformations (*vrittis*) and restlessness. Directly confronting the fact that the only obstacle to Self-realization is inaccurate perception of one's true nature provides the opportunity to choose to be Self-realized. Self-discernment is *Jnana Yoga*: direct apprehension of knowledge of the truth of one's true nature that results in awareness of wholeness. Calming and stopping the actions of subliminal impulses can be accomplished by practice of *Raja Yoga*: alert, attentive meditative contemplation of one's true nature and the reality of God. To awaken easily and quickly, both ways should be used. When Self-realization is stable, it persists even when thoughts, emotions, and sensory perceptions are experienced.

Because our awareness is inclined to identify with that to which our attention is directed (or attracted), mastery of attention is the key to learning, living effectively, and to actualizing rapid spiritual growth. The opening statement in the *yoga-sutras* is, "*Now*, instruction in yoga [samadhi], in accord with an established tradition, begins." The word "now" is included to indicate that the disciple is receptive to learning because of being prepared and attentive.

Inability to focus attention is a common problem for many people. When emotions are conflicted and thoughts are disordered, concentration is impaired. It is then difficult to remember our major purposes, effectively communicate with others, comprehend what is studied, accomplish work, pray successfully, or meditate with alert intention. Awareness is fragmented: divided

and dispersed. Confusion prevails. Perceptions of past experiences, present circumstances, and hopes of future possibilities, are unclear and often mixed together. One then tends to allow whims and urges to determine behaviors and to be primarily influenced by the activated forces of accumulated memories and desires (karmic impressions). Feelings of helplessness may dominate awareness. Desirous of having an anchor to provide a degree of stability in the shifting seas of circumstances, one may then more frantically cling to the illusional sense of personality-oriented selfhood rather than try to awaken to a higher (less confining) level of awareness.

Attention flows easily to an object which is of interest to us. Powers of concentration can be improved by nurturing an interest in learning how to live effectively, grow to emotional maturity, and accomplish authentic spiritual growth. Interest can be inspired by curiosity. How would you feel (at the innermost core of your being) if you were able to easily accomplish clearly defined purposes and have your worthwhile desires effortlessly fulfilled? How would you feel if you were intellectually discerning, intuitively insightful, emotionally mature, self-confident, and competent in the performance of all duties and actions? How would you feel (and what would your understanding be) if you were spiritually awake, Self-realized, and God-conscious?

Use your powers of imagination to visualize the conditions, circumstances, and states of consciousness you consider to be most ideal. Believe with soul conviction that you can and will actualize them. Belief in the possibility of accomplishment is empowering and impelling—it awakens soul forces and abilities, sustains our inspiration, and motivates us to right actions.

Avoid comparing your spiritual progress with that of others whom you might know or have read or heard about. What others do, or do not do, should not be of interest to you. No one else has the same history, mind-body constitution, psychological temperament, or aspiration to be Self-realized and liberated that you

have. Remember that spiritual awakening can be slow, moderate, or rapid, in accord with one's capacity, preparedness, and intensity of focus and practice. Some devotees endeavor for years with little success. Others experience steady, progressive unfoldment. A few awaken quickly. Be one of the few who awaken to Self-realization quickly because of right resolve, right living, right spiritual practice, and responsiveness to the soul-originated impulse to have your awareness restored to wholeness.

Do these things:

- Renounce ideas, opinions, relationships, activities, and behaviors which are incompatible with your aspiration to be fully awake and freely functional.
- Come to terms with your memories. If you have made mistakes in the past, forgive yourself and choose to do better from now on. If someone has hurt or abused you, your forgiveness will release the pain from such memories.
- Simplify your life. Have regular routines for activity, rest, work or service, philosophical study, and spiritual practice.
- Be prudent in the use of available resources.
- Conserve your vital energies so that they can be transmuted into finer forces that will strengthen your body, refine your nervous system, energize your mind, and empower you to accomplish your worthy purposes.
- Practice Kriya Yoga meditation techniques on a regular schedule and merge your awareness in pure consciousness.

Quicken your spiritual evolution by concentrating only on essential matters and disregarding all that is not essential.
– Paramahansa Yogananda –

The Shiva Samhita

Continued from the previous issue.

Chapter Three
On Yoga Practice: The Vital Airs (Pranas)

1. In the heart [*chakra*], there is a brilliant lotus with twelve petals adorned with brilliant signs. It has the [Sanskrit] letters from *k* to *th*.

The radiations of the prana frequencies of the chakras are portrayed as petals of the lotus flower. The base chakra has four prana frequencies; the sacral chakra has six; the lumbar chakra has ten; the dorsal (heart) chakra has twelve; the cervical chakra has sixteen. To improve powers of meditative concentration, each petal may be visualized as having the sound frequency of a specific letter of the Sanskrit alphabet. The various colors of the chakras may be perceived, reflected in the spiritual eye, and their sound frequencies heard inwardly.

2. *Prana* lives [dwells] there, adorned with various desires, accompanied by its past works that have no beginning, and joined with egoism [*ahamkara*].

When soul awareness is identified with the illusory sense of independent selfhood (*ahamkara*, "I-action"), one usually feels centered in the region of the physical heart near the dorsal chakra. Ego consciousness is identified with deluded ideas, illusional perceptions, instincts, and desires.

4. Some names are *prana*, *apana*, *samana*, *udana*, *vyana*, and *kurma*.

5. These are their principle names; they perform functions as incited to do so by their own actions.

Of the functions of the various modifications of life force: *prana* regulates breathing; *apana* eliminates waste products; *samana* regulates digestion and assimilation; *udana* directs vital forces upward; *vyana* governs the circulation of life forces and other substances through the various systems of the body. *Kurma* is the name given to the primary *prana* flowing into the body from the medulla oblongata.

6. Of these, in my opinion, *prana* and *apana* are the important agents [of action].

7. The seat of *prana* is the heart; the seat of *apana*, the anus; of *samana*, the region of the navel; of *udana*, the throat. *Vyana* moves throughout the body.

8. The other vital airs [moving forces] perform their own functions.

The modifications of life force have subtle aspects and specialized functions.

9. One who in this way knows the characteristics of the body, being absolved from all error, reaches the highest state [of realization].

The actions of vital forces in the body are comprehended when their presence and influences are experienced. When one discerns the difference between the Self as pure being and ordinary states of blurred awareness, delusions and illusions are absent. Self- and God-realization is then quickly actualized.

10. Now I shall tell you how to easily attain success in Yoga, which by knowing, yogis never fail in their practice.

11. Only knowledge imparted from the lips of the guru is powerful and useful; otherwise knowledge is fruitless and weak.

Instruction received from one's enlightened teacher is potent with the guru's realization and presented to meet the specific

needs of the seeker of truth. All other knowledge that may be acquired is mere information.

12. One who is devoted to knowledge, while pleasing the guru, readily obtains the fruit of that knowledge.

To be receptive to the knowledge imparted by the teacher, one must be attuned to the teacher's mind and consciousness.

13. There is not the least doubt that the guru is father, mother, and [an embodiment of] God. As such, the guru should be served by all [devotees] with their thoughts, words, and deeds.

An enlightened teacher cares about the student's well-being and shares knowledge and experience of God. The best service that a disciple can offer to the teacher is to be attentive to what is taught and apply it with diligence.

14. By the guru's favor, everything good is obtained.

When the disciple is receptive, the guru's practical knowledge and inward realization can be effectively transmitted. My guru, Paramahansa Yogananda, said to disciples, "I give you everything; you have to be receptive to receiving it."

15. Let the disciple approach the guru with reverence.

One need not be in awe of the teacher, for the one Life of God dwells equally in everyone. What is recommended is that the student have respect for the teacher's knowledge and state of God-realization. The relationship between the student and the teacher is then a soul-to-soul relationship that transcends personality characteristics.

16. One who has self-control attains success by faith. Therefore, with faith, Yoga should be practiced with care and perseverance.

Mastery of sensory and mental impulses is the first requirement for one on this path. By faith (soul-based conviction) sensory and mental impulses can easily be regulated and all worthwhile purposes can be accomplished. Attentiveness to important details and persistence in practice definitely result in success.

17. Those who are addicted to sensual pleasures, who keep bad company, who are disbelievers, who are devoid of respect toward their guru, who resort to promiscuous assemblies, who are addicted to false and vain controversies, who are cruel in their speech, and who do not satisfy the guru, never attain success [in Yoga].

18. The first condition of success is the firm belief that one's practice will be successful. The second condition is having faith in one's practice. The third is respect toward one's guru. The fourth is having the spirit of universal equality. The fifth is restraint of the senses. The sixth is moderation in eating. These are all of the conditions; there are no others.

19. Having received instructions in Yoga, and having obtained a guru who knows Yoga, let the devotee practice with earnestness and faith in accord with the method taught by the teacher.

Instruction in Yoga includes explanations of philosophical principles and of procedures that can enable the practitioner to experience superconscious (samadhi) states. Recommendations are in accord with the student's capacity for practice, psychological temperament, and degree of spiritual awareness. Personal instruction is meant for the disciple to whom it is given and should not be discussed with anyone.

20. Let the yogi go to a pleasant, secluded place, assume the meditation posture, and begin to practice breath regulation [pranayama: to balance flows of life force and awaken dormant soul forces].

A clean, well-ordered, quiet environment is recommended for spiritual practice. Yogis without secular responsibilities may

withdraw to a remote place, away from circumstances which may be distracting. For most people, with family and work duties to perform, spiritual practice can be done at home during the early morning hours or whenever one chooses.

21. The wise beginner should keep the body firm and unmoving, with hands joined as if in supplication, and salute the guru. Salutations should be made to *Ganesha* and the guardians of the worlds.

When first sitting for the purpose of practice, poised and still, one should acknowledge with reverential respect: the teacher, God as the remover of all obstacles (*Ganesha*), and the various aspects of God's consciousness that maintain the orderly actions of the universe.

Pranayama

22. Then let the wise practitioner close the right nostril with the right thumb, inspire air through the left nostril, and keep the air confined; afterwards let him breathe out slowly, and not forcibly, through the right nostril.

23. Then let him draw breath through the right nostril, hold the breath, and expel the air through the left nostril, slowly and gently.

24. According to this method, the devotee should practice twenty *kumbhakas* (stopping of the breath). This should be practiced daily without neglect or idleness, free from sentimental attachment, hate, doubt, and contention.

When practicing this pranayama routine, which is done slowly and smoothly, a momentary pause occurs after inhalation and after exhalation. The pause after inhalation is usually longer because of the retention of air. There should be no attempt to forcibly restrain the flow of breathing. Beginners can practice this pranayama ten times, with inhalation and exhalation considered as one cycle. As one's capacity increases, up to twenty times can easily be done.

15. This routine should be practiced four times each day: at sunrise, noon, sunset, and midnight.

A schedule of four pranayama sessions each day (before dawn, noon, evening, and midnight, at intervals of six hours) is recommended for those whose practice is intensive. For the average devotee, who is not able to schedule four sessions, twice a day is sufficient.

26. When this has been regularly practiced daily for three months, the *nadis* will readily and surely be purified.

Nadis are channels through which *prana* [life forces] circulate. This pranayama routine balances the actions of *pranas* and clears the channels through which they flow. It is referred to as *nadi* (prana pathway) *shuddi* (purification).

27. When the *nadis* of the truth-perceiving yogi are purified, that one enters into the first stage in the practice of Yoga.

28. Certain signs are perceived in the body of the yogi whose *nadis* have been purified. I shall briefly describe these signs.

29. The body of the person who practices pranayama becomes harmoniously developed, emits a sweet scent, and looks beautiful and lovely. In all of the Yoga practices there are four stages [of progress]: the beginning; the state of cooperation of Self and Higher Self [God, the larger field of Consciousness]; unfoldment of [innate] knowledge; the final consummation [*samadhi*].

30. I have already described the first stage of pranayama practice; the rest will also be explained. They destroy error and sorrow.

31. The following qualities are characteristic of yogis: strong appetite, good digestion, cheerfulness, handsome figure, great courage, mighty enthusiasm, and full strength.

32. Now I will tell you of the great obstacles to Yoga which must be avoided; by their removal, yogis easily cross over this sea of worldly travail.

33. The yogi should renounce the following: acidic, astringent, pungent, salty, and bitter tastes; foods cooked in oil; much walking; theft; cruelty toward and killing of animals; enmity toward others; untruth; [preoccupation with] thoughts other than liberation of consciousness; idle social companionship; excessive heat; excessive talking; excessive eating.

The dietary guidelines are for the purpose of maintaining balanced actions of the governing principles (*doshas*) which determine health and well-being (see *An Easy Guide to Ayurveda*). All six tastes can be included in moderation, with only minimal quantities of the tastes which excite, aggravate, or increase any of the governing principles. Sweet, nourishing foods, in moderation, are recommended. Destructive mental attitudes and emotional states should be renounced. Useless social interaction should be avoided. Moderation in all activities should be observed. Aspiration to spiritual growth that culminates in enlightenment should prevail.

34. Now I will tell you the means by which success in Yoga is quickly obtained; for certain success, this information must be kept secret.

35. The dedicated yogi should use only clarified butter (ghee), milk, and sweet foods; speak only kind words; dwell in a modest abode; hear discourses on truth; perform household duties without attachment; sing the name of God; hear sweet music; have patience; be constant in practice; be forgiving; practice austerities and purifications; be modest, devotional, and dedicated to the service of the guru.

36. When the air enters the sun (when *pingala*, the solar current is dominant) is the proper time for the yogi to eat food; when the air enters the moon (when *ida*, the lunar current is dominant) is the best time to sleep.

When air flows more freely through the right nostril, powers of digestion and assimilation are pronounced. When air flows more freely through the left nostril, mental and emotional states are pacified and awareness is more inward.

37. Pranayama should not be practiced just after meals, nor when one is very hungry. Before beginning pranayama practice, milk and ghee can be taken.

Immediately after eating, the body's digestive processes are active. If hunger is sharp early in the morning, one can drink a small quantity of milk (or sweet fruit juice). Ghee (clarified butter) in moderate quantities is recommended for persons who practice pranayama or who experience dynamic *shakti* (kundalini energy) activity when meditating.

38. When one is well established in practice of pranayama, these restrictions need not be observed. Food should be taken in moderate quantities. Pranayamas should be practiced daily on a regular schedule.

39. When the yogi can, at will, regulate the flows of prana and breath, success in practice is certain.

40. In the first stage of pranayama practice, the yogi's body may perspire. This perspiration should be massaged into the skin, to harmonize the governing principles of the basic constitution.

41. In the second stage of pranayama practice, the body may tremble. In the third stage, the body may hop like a frog. With continued practice, the yogi may levitate.

42. When the yogi, maintaining the meditation posture, can rise in the air, know that mastery of vital forces has been acquired which banishes consciousness-clouding delusions.

43. So long as success is not acquired, the yogi should continue to practice pranayama in accord with the guidelines. Perfection in pranayama practice is indicated by a decrease of sleep and waste matters.

Trembling or sudden movements, which may be experienced when vital forces begin to awaken, can usually be avoided by relaxing the body more completely. The flows of prana will then be directed inward. In extreme instances, involuntary movements

of the lower limbs may occur, causing one to bounce up and down. In the Kriya Yoga tradition, preoccupation with phenomena is discouraged. Although rare instances of physical levitation have been reported, it has nothing to do with clearing awareness and awakening to transcendent states of consciousness. To elevate awareness above (remove it from) mental states which blur one's perception of Self and God is of greater value. Because of reduction of stress, deep rest, balanced flows of vital forces (and appropriate, moderate diet), a yogi's need for sleep is diminished and the body's waste products are minimal. Energies that are conserved can be used to strengthen the immune system and rejuvenate the body.

44. The truth-perceiving yogi becomes free from disease, afflictions, and sorrow.

45. When the three *doshas—vata, pitta,* and *kapha*—are balanced, the yogi may [occasionally] be irregular in diet and habits without having difficulties.

Vata, pitta, and *kapha* are, respectively, the space-air circulating influence, fire or transformative influence, and the water or moistening influence present throughout Nature which govern biological functions.

46. If large or small quantities of food are [occasionally] eaten, no injury will result.

When the mind-body constitution is strong, occasional lapses in dietary (and other) routines will not cause problems.

47. Even though there may be many difficult obstacles to the practice of Yoga, the yogi should continue with diligence.

All obstacles can be overcome by acquiring knowledge of how to live effectively and by right spiritual practice. Constructive actions can neutralize the effects of prior destructive actions.

Spiritual awakening clarifies perception and improves receptivity to superior influences.

48. Let the yogi, sitting in a retired place and restraining the senses, mentally chant the long-flowing Om to destroy all obstacles.

Long-flowing Om is chanted "O-o-o-o-o-m-m-m-m-m" with a nasalized "n" sound concluding the final intonation of "m." Om is the primary mantra from which the potency of all other mantras is derived. Audible and mental chanting of Om has a harmonizing effect on the mind and nervous system. Om can be inwardly heard when attention is internalized. It can also be mentally chanted with inhalation and exhalation when practicing the basic pranayama described in the text.

49. By pranayama practice, the wise yogi surely destroys all karma, whether acquired in this incarnation or in the past.

50. By pranayama practice, the accomplished yogi destroys the various virtues and vices accumulated in the past incarnations.

51. Pranayama practice destroys the results of error, as fire burns cotton; it also destroys the bonds of all of the yogi's good actions.

Vital forces, flowing freely, contribute to physical health, energize the mind, purify the faculty of intellectual discernment, weaken and dissolve mental impressions of destructive habits and tendencies, clarify awareness, elicit superconscious states, and remove the practitioner's awareness from problem-centered, egocentric states. Attachments to constructive actions are also dissolved, enabling one to live spontaneously without being influenced by past choices and actions of any kind.

52. The accomplished yogi, having attained the *siddhis* and having crossed the ocean of virtue and vice by pranayama practice, moves about freely in the three worlds.

When soul abilities (*siddhis*) are unfolded and can be actualized at will, and ordinary concepts of cause and effect have been transcended, all levels of consciousness are accessible to the yogi. One can then express freely at physical, mental, and superconscious levels. When the wholeness of Consciousness is perceived, obstacles cease to exist.

53. *Siddhis* undoubtedly result when the yogi can be established in breathlessness.

The goal of spiritual practice is not to stop breathing; it is to accomplish the state of inward tranquility which is not dependent upon thought processes driven by restless prana flows and erratic breathing patterns. When vital force is directed through the spinal pathway to the higher brain centers, and breathing is shallow and slow, awareness is clear. Soul qualities and abilities spontaneously unfold when superconsciousness is sustained.

54. The *siddhis* that may be acquired include prophecy, moving freely in space at will, clairvoyance, and becoming invisible.

The author of the *Shiva Samhita* mentions but a few of the exceptional abilities which are more fully described in Part Three of Patanjali's *yoga-sutras* and in some other texts on Yoga.

55. When the yogi, by practice of pranayama, accomplishes the stage when pranas are balanced, there is nothing in this world that cannot be accomplished.

56. That stage is accomplished when the vital forces, the soul, and the one Consciousness are in harmonious accord.

57. When the yogi can remain concentrated for three hours, certainly the wonderful state of internalization of attention is accomplished.

It is not necessary to believe that a specific duration of time will be required to accomplish internalization of attention. Here,

the emphasis is upon the (usual) necessity of meditating deep and long in order to calm the senses and mind and become stable in a superconscious state. With practice, internalization of attention can be accomplished immediately.

58. Whatever is perceived, let it be considered as an aspect of the one Consciousness. When the modes of action of the various senses are known, they can be mastered.

59. Then, by practice, the yogi accomplishes the stage where the *ida* and *pingala* currents are balanced and steady, and vital force is established in the *sushumna*.

60. When, by the practice of Yoga, one acquires the power of action (*kriya shakti*), pierces through the six chakras, and is stable in samadhi, one truly perceives the threefold effects of karma.

Kriya yoga pranayama enables one to direct life force through the chakras and experience superconscious states. Intuition provides insight into the characteristics of the karmic condition. Karmic impressions which are only mildly influential blur awareness and cause *tamasic* (heavy, inertial) influences to prevail. Karmic impressions which are compelling attract corresponding circumstances, incite us to action, or cause mental and emotional unrest. Karmic impressions which are dormant may be activated in the future. All karmic impressions should be neutralized and dissolved by wise actions, renunciation, dispassion, the superior influences of superconsciousness, and Self-realization.

61. Then, let the yogi vanquish the multitudes of karmic impressions by Om. Let the yogi accomplish the process of working out or eliminating all karmic influences in one life cycle, and avoid the possibility of future incarnations.

After all preliminary meditation techniques have been practiced, listening to and merging in Om is the final practice. The source of Om is God. Therefore, one can merge awareness in Om

while aspiring to apprehend and realize God.

62. Let the yogi contemplate the element influences of the chakras and be removed from the influences of subtle forces in space, air or prana influences, and the influences of fire, water, and earth elements.

63. Let the wise yogi practice extended meditative contemplation on the chakras and at the spiritual eye. By this means, mastery of the subtle elements is acquired.

By looking into the spiritual eye when attention is internalized, the lights of the chakras and their prana frequencies may be apprehended.

64. The wise yogi, who thus steadfastly practices such meditative contemplation, never dies [even] through hundreds of cycles of Brahma.

When established in the samadhi of Self-realization, even though one were to live through many cycles of creation and dissolution of the universe (countless trillions of years), no clouding of awareness or Self-forgetfulness would occur. The exaggerated statement made in the text is for the purpose of inspiring practitioners of Yoga to persist in their resolve to awaken to their full spiritual potential.

Kriya Yoga Philosophy, Traditions, and Practices

Your participation is invited. Use the form provided with each issue.

Q. What is the meaning of the word individualized in the phrase "an individualized unit of God consciousness" in regard to the soul?

Something that is individualized is modified, made distinct. The enlivening aspect of God interacting with Primary Nature (Om as space, time, and cosmic forces) expresses as individual units of God's consciousness, thus the affirmation that we are made in the image and likeness of God. When units of God's being identify with mind and matter, they are referred to as souls. Our true essence has all of the attributes and qualities of God. It is the real Self of us that is to be known or realized.

Q. Please explain the differences (or similarities) between mental states, states of consciousness, states of awareness, emotional states, and consciousness.

A "state" is a condition or mode of existence. A state of mind (or of consciousness, awareness, or emotions) is its present condition. Consciousness, in its pure aspect, is always what it is. When we are established in realization of our true nature, we can view states or conditions of mind, awareness, and emotions as being other than us. When we are identified with them because they are not viewed with objectivity, our perceptions are veiled in accord with the modes or conditions which prevail.

Q. In this "living" Kriya Yoga tradition, how are various "family" members of this tradition attracted to it? Why have some spiritual traditions died out?

Our Kriya Yoga tradition is "alive" because spiritual force flows through the lineage of enlightened gurus and the many initiates who are engaged in its practices. Souls are attracted to a living tradition because of their attunement to its unique quality of spiritual energy. That is why, when souls establish a connection with a living tradition with which they are compatible, they feel they have "come home." There are no doubts in their mind in regard to whether or not the tradition and its teachings are meaningful to them.

Spiritual traditions die out because: (1) they have served their purpose; (2) the teachings become adulterated; (3) when their spiritually enlightened representatives leave this world, there are no successors to continue the mission. The basic teachings may then persist in written form or as taught by persons who are not Self-realized. Some traditions are revived and revitalized, as was the Kriya Yoga tradition by Mahavatar Babaji.

Q. Is recognizing our "right place in life" a matter of destiny?

We can know our "right place in life" by using our common sense, intellect, and intuition. A dictionary definition of *common sense* is "the ability to make right decisions based on available knowledge." The "right place" in the universe for us is were we are best suited to function in accord with our knowledge, skills, and talents. The role we play may change as we learn, grow, and become more knowledgeable and skillful, and intellectually and intuitively discerning. When we are in our "right place" we are fulfilling our *dharma*: we are able to perform our duties in ways which are supportive of others and of Nature while having the support of the forces of Nature. When we are spiritually aware and devoid of egoism we become more intuitively discerning and

events and circumstances unfold in ways which reveal to us that we are on our right path in life. Karmic conditions then become less influential as soul-impelled inclinations increasingly determine our destiny. Instead of being compelled to think and act by subconscious tendencies and past desires (karma), we think and act spontaneously and appropriately. We are conscious of being participants in the ever-flowing stream of life, aware that we are but playing a role instead of struggling to survive or endeavoring to dominate or control.

Q. In recent months I have been preoccupied with almost constant thoughts of past events in my life. My ability to concentrate is not what it used to be—and fantasies about mundane matters sometimes occur. I wonder if this is a "discharging" process to cleanse my mind, in accord with my past desire to accomplish a state of nonattachment?

The natural tendency of the soul to be aware of something is mentioned in Patanjali's *yoga-sutras* (1.3-6). If we are not soul-centered and aware of our true nature in relationship to the larger field of Consciousness, our awareness tends to be involved with mental modifications (acquired valid or factual information, acquired or self-created invalid or erroneous information, fantasies, memories, and the state of sleep). Preoccupation with memories and episodes of fantasy may be the result of tiredness, hormonal imbalance, confusion, disinterest in living and learning, or weak will power (insufficient self-determination). Sleep sufficiently, exercise on a regular schedule, eat nutritious foods, and maintain a self-care program to ensure health and a high level of energy, and organize your affairs so that you are secure, comfortable, and mentally and emotionally peaceful. Clearly define, in writing, your goals and projects and the means by which you will fulfill them. If you are of middle age or older, it may be that you are going through the phase of reviewing your past in order to come to terms with it and chart your course into the future. It is normal to do this. The important matter now is to do

things to ensure your overall health and well-being.

Q. How can one with a Christian background relate Kriya Yoga philosophy to the concepts of Christian theology?

The best approach is to live right, pray with devotion, and meditate to nurture spiritual growth rather than try to adapt philosophical concepts to the opinions of theologians. As you awaken to Self- and God-knowledge you will be able to intuitively discern truth and easily ignore untruth. The Kriya Yoga approach to spiritual enlightenment is not dependent upon beliefs; it is the way of personal discovery. The philosophical principles upon which Kriya Yoga practices are based provide an explanation of God, souls, processes of cosmic manifestation, and how to restore soul awareness to wholeness. While an intellectual grasp of these principles is helpful, the great essential is to directly apprehend and experience the truth for ourselves. Christians, Buddhists, Hindus, Moslems, and adherents of other traditional systems of religion, can relate to their preferred forms of worship and cultural modes of behavior, avoid intellectual debate, and practice Kriya Yoga processes to nurture spiritual growth.

Q. What are the attributes of God, soul abilities, soul impulses, and soul characteristics?

Attributes are characteristics. The Absolute, pure aspect of God is devoid of attributes, just as the soul, at the innermost core of its being, is devoid of attributes. The aspect of God that is involved with Nature has three primary attributes (Sanskrit *gunas*): *sattva*, the purifying, illuminating attribute; *rajas*, which promotes actions and transformation; *tamas*, the cause of heaviness or inertia. Any other characteristic of Consciousness which may be perceived can be considered to be an attribute of God. Meditators can become aware of and contemplate the attributes of inner light and sound (Om).

Soul abilities (*siddhis*) are the soul's functional abilities. When fully unfolded, they may be expressed as the ability to: (1) intuitively know whatever is desired to be known; (2) identify with the smallest unit of matter; (3) expand awareness to omnipresence; (4) apprehend omnipotence and be omniscient; (5) have desires immediately fulfilled; (6) be impervious to the influences of Nature and cosmic forces, and more. All of the capacities of God are innate to the soul. It is only the soul's identification with inertia (*tamas guna*) and mental modifications or conditionings that obscures its perception of the truth of itself. Deluded (unaware of the truth of their being) souls tend to remain habit-bound, mistaking themselves to be mortal, impotent beings rather than the immortal, spiritual beings they are.

Soul impulses are innate urges that impel us to express and to awaken to Self-knowledge. When they are allowed to prevail, our curiosity and courage enables us to explore possibilities for learning and growing. When they are denied or suppressed, we tend to remain semiconscious and to conform to the ideas and modes of behavior of others who are similarly inclined to remain ignorant of their spiritual potential. Because God's consciousness is individualized as souls, the characteristics of God and of souls are the same.

Q. Can the principles of the Samkhya philosophical system be related to quantum physics?

A dictionary definition of *quantum* indicates the word origin to be the Latin neuter of *quantus*, "how great," in regard to a quantity or amount. Physics: (a) an individual unit of measurable energy; (b) the particle mediating a specific type of fundamental interaction. *Samkhya* (to enumerate objects of knowledge) philosophy classifies categories of the manifestations which emanate from the one Consciousness and attempts to describe their characteristics and those of the various cosmic forces. Samkhya philosophy asserts the origin of all manifested things to be a single

field of Consciousness. It is of interest to note that, among the many modern scientists who are now in quest of a Unified Field Theory that will provide an understanding of the universe and its processes, some are of the opinion that it will be discovered within the next twenty years. I think that an understanding of Samkhya philosophy would be helpful to anyone who is engaged in scientific research.

Q. Lahiri Mahasaya, Sri Yukteswar, and Paramahansa Yogananda left their bodies many years ago. How can they know when I think about them, or attempt to invoke their presence? Is it possible that they have reincarnated? Is there any information that can be shared about Babaji's sister, Mataji?

While thinking about or attempting to invoke the presence of saints who have left their physical bodies may not actually result in a personal connection, attunement with the level of awareness they are presumed to—or do—have can be accomplished. In this way, our idealized concept of them can serve as a point-of-contact with the level of awareness we desire to realize. From this, inspiration can be derived and knowledge which corresponds to that level of awareness can be apprehended.

Yes, Lahiri Mahasaya, Sri Yukteswar, and Paramahansa Yogananda may be reincarnated. Or they may be fully involved with present duties and activities in subtle realms, be absorbed in a transcendent samadhi state, or may have completely awakened from identification with all realms, including the realm of Primary Nature. Paramahansaji said he would return to Earth but did not say when. He did say that he would spend some time with Babaji in the Himalayas.

The only authentic information about Babaji's sister that has been published is the brief mention in chapter thirty-three of the book *Autobiography of a Yogi*.

Q. I have been told that there are individuals who, although they have regularly practiced Kriya Yoga meditation techniques for many years, are not yet enlightened. Why is this?

Although regular practice of Kriya meditation techniques produce some psychological and physiological benefits, for spiritual awakening and growth to occur, one should also fervently aspire to awaken and grow, and endeavor to consciously live as an enlightened person. Many initiates perform their practices mechanically and continue to think and feel themselves to be mere human beings with many problems to overcome. They hope for improvement—sometime—but do not actively endeavor to renounce their delusions, see through their illusions, or change mental attitudes or behaviors. Even though meditation is practiced regularly, devotees also have to do their best to perfect the *yamas* (restraints) and *niyamas* (positive actions) as described in the *yoga-sutras* (see the chapter "The Practice of Kriya Yoga" in my book *Life Surrendered in God*). The meditation techniques should be practiced with conscious intention and be followed by an extended interlude of sitting in thought-free, tranquil, meditative silence.

Q. I mentally talk to God when I am working and pray to God when I sit to meditate. In spite of my constant asking for God to come to me, awareness of God eludes me. What else can I do to become aware of God's presence?

Examine your concept of God. Are you thinking that God is a Being removed from you, or that you have to make yourself worthy to experience God's presence? The truth is, God is not other than you. You are an expressive aspect of God. The only barrier to apprehending the reality of God is the illusional idea that souls and God are separate entities. It is normal for devotees new on the path to pray to God. Change your approach: pray *in* God. Feel yourself to be immersed in God. Pray and meditate to dis-

solve your sense of independent existence and you will soon experience soul-satisfying wholeness.

Q. Although I meditate everyday, when I am at work and during occasions of interactions with family members or friends, I tend to become overly involved with the mental attitudes, concerns, and behaviors of others with whom I associate. How can I function effectively in the world and still maintain Self-awareness and inner peace?

Devote at least an hour every day to meditation and inspirational reading. If possible, do this in the morning. It will then be easier to maintain soul awareness and a friendly yet dispassionate attitude in relationship to others and their conversations and behaviors. There is no need to dramatize a pious demeanor, just get along with others without becoming emotionally involved with situations which might disturb the clarity of your awareness and your inner peace. Have a short meditation session at the end of the work day to unstress and relax.

- Avoid faultfinding and judgmental attitudes. Acknowledge the innate divine nature of everyone and relate to it.
- Do your work, attend to your duties, and relate to others with courtesy, skill, and appropriateness. This is the right way to behave; it is natural for you. Do it as a spiritual exercise with no expectations of personal recognition or reward.
- During the day, pause for a few moments from time to time. Be still until you are poised and relaxed. Practice a few gentle kriya pranayamas until you feel the aliveness in your spine.
- When engaged in activities and relationships, whenever you are aware of being too involved with externals, put your attention in the spinal pathway, heart chakra, and spiritual eye.
- Mentally chant, "Om" or "Om God" several times. Perhaps the chanting will subconsciously continue for a while, and thoughts of God will persist throughout the day.
- Have a picture of your guru (or the lineage of gurus) in your

wallet and look at it now and then. In your heart, always have loving, respectful thoughts and feelings in regard to the gurus.

- Set aside at least one day each week for rest and recreation. Dismiss all mundane concerns from your mind. Let Nature's healing forces and your innate energies refresh your mind and restore and maintain your mind-body constitution in a healthy, balanced condition.
- You are never alone. You abide in God. You can be in mental and spiritual communion with the saints and with the thousands of kriya devotees in the world.

By patient practice, you will learn to be serenely content in the world while being always inwardly established in Self-knowledge and God-awareness.

Q. At times, I feel that I might make faster spiritual progress if I were living in an ashram or spiritual community. Do you think this would be helpful?

First, ask, "Why do I want to do it?" Is it because you want to withdraw from secular duties and challenges, or is it because you want to be completely involved in activities which you think will be more meaningful to you?

When I asked Paramahansaji (December 25, 1949) for his permission to be with him, he said, "This is not a path of escapism." Then, after a short conversation with me, he said, "Yes, you can stay."

Be aware of the fact that, wherever you go, you will probably take your habits, moods, and personality characteristics with you. It may be that a change of environment will result in a change of viewpoint that will make it easy to renounce troublesome psychological states and habits. After an initial period of adaptation, and when the momentum of a new beginning begins to wane, you will have to settle down to a meaningful program of study, reflection, spiritual practice, and work. Others in the commu-

nity may not be as supportive of you as you might expect. You will still have to cultivate inward aloneness and independence—which can often be done just as easily, if not more easily, in a secular environment of your choosing where you will not be expected to conform to community rules or standards. An ideal environment *can* be supportive. Finding it will be the major problem to solve. One way to approach the matter is to intensify your spiritual practices now, while being open to possibilities that might be presented to you. Then you can make wiser and better choices about what to do.

For young devotees, a short period of training—a few months or years—in an ideal ashram environment can be useful. Older devotees may also find ashram life to be very supportive of them after retirement from their jobs.

Lahiri Mahasaya advised most of his disciples to live ordinary lives and practice meditation privately, as he did. Paramahansaji often advised persons who were living effectively in the secular world to continue to do so. To one person, he said, "Continue with your work and relationships. Meditate deeply. Set a good example for others. Support this work (the organization) when you can. Attract people to you who are interested in meditation, and teach them how to do it."

Remember that you belong to no one and that no one belongs to you. Reflect that some day you will suddenly have to leave everything in this world—so make the acquaintance of God now.
– Lahiri Mahasaya –

Addendum

Staying in Tune With Our Tradition

On Monday, March 9, I visited the beautiful new temple at the Self-Realization Fellowship Lake Shrine in Pacific Palisades, California. First opened to the public and dedicated by Paramahansa Yogananda on August 20, 1950, the Lake Shrine was one of my guru's favorite sites. Shortly after it was donated to his organization, Paramahansaji asked Mr. J.J. Lynn (Rajasi Janakananda) to purchase the property just above it. He then instructed the SRF board of directors to build a temple there when the time was right to do so. The facility accommodates over 400 persons in the main sanctuary (see the photo in the May-June issue of TRUTH JOURNAL). When you are in southern California, visit the SRF Lake Shrine and some of the other centers where Paramahansaji walked the grounds. His "living presence" is still there.

Later that same day, I visited SRF headquarters on Mount Washington (near Highland Park), meditated in the chapel where I received Kriya initiation from my guru, and went to his private rooms where I occasionally met with him, usually late in the evening, to receive his instructions and blessings.

I will be at CSA headquarters through the summer and will set aside time to meet with kriya initiates during the week long retreats. If you live within easy travel distance, remember that you are welcome to attend the initiation services this summer. It is always helpful to review the practices and renew our commitment to the path.

Sri Yukteswar (May 10, 1855 - March 9, 1936)

The anniversaries of the physical birth of saints, and of their departure from the body, are considered to be auspicious occasions for remembering their service to the world and for deeper meditation. Remember Sri Yukteswar, Paramahansa Yogananda's guru, on May 10 and meditate a little longer than you usually do.

Disregarding externals, fixing the gaze inward between the eyebrows, harmonizing the breath within the nostrils; the devotee established in knowledge, whose highest aspiration is liberation of consciousness, whose senses, mind, and intellect are controlled, from whom desire, fear, and anger have departed, is forever free.
– The Bhagavad Gita 5.27,28 –

Sri Yukteswar's commentary:

Those devotees who have renounced the pleasure sensations of the objects of the senses, who have fixed [their] attention between the eyebrows and tranquilized *prana* and *apana* in the nostrils, who have restrained their senses, mind, and intellect and have become free from desire, fear, and anger, are already liberated while living in the physical body. This state is referred to as *jivanmukta* (soul-freedom).

Note: Making *prana* and *apana*, the aspects of life force that govern inhalation and exhalation, tranquility is accomplished by pranayama and meditative contemplation. When the impulses that ordinarily cause mental restlessness are stilled, Self-awareness is realized.

Back cover: Shiva Temple: Tiruvannamalai, South India.

Radiance

A Forum for Kriya Yoga Initiates

July – September 1998 Number 17

The Eternal Way

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Light Through the Ages

THE UNFOLDMENT OF SOUL ABILITIES

In chapter three of Patanjali's *yoga-sutras*, the exceptional powers of perception which devotees may acquire as a result of concentrated spiritual practice are described.

Dialogue

PHILOSOPHY, TRADITIONS & PRACTICES

Open discussion. Reader participation invited.

Addendum

Mahavatar Babaji Commemoration Day.
Retreat Schedule. Book announcement.

Except for work [actions] performed as offerings to God,
this world is in bondage to karma [causes and their effects],
therefore, remaining free from attachments, perform all
of your actions as offerings to God
– Bhagavad Gita 3.9 –

Publisher's Note

In this issue, the "Light Through the Ages" theme is from the book I am preparing for publication in late September (see announcement on the back cover). The commentary on the *Shiva Samhita* will continue with the next issue.

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The Only Work* That is Worthwhile

The most efficient way to accomplish goals and to fulfill purposes is to emulate the actions of others who are living effectively. To *emulate* is to apply the same procedures to accomplish identical results. To merely superficially imitate physical actions will not produce satisfying results. Our actions are determined by our mental states and states of awareness; therefore, if we are to be successful in actualizing desires, the *mental states and states of awareness which are similar to those of our role models* must also be assumed. By wisely applying the fundamental principles which determine successful outcomes, we can fulfill our *dharma*—the duties which enable us to accomplish the real purpose for our having come into this world.

A common self-defeating habit of personality-centered devotees is that, instead of expanding their awareness and learning to function effectively, they allow their awareness to be confined and restricted by their conditioned mental and emotional states and compulsive behaviors. They cannot perceive the fact that they are responsible for their own experiences, or, knowing that they are creating their own problems, they resist making the changes in mental attitude and behaviors which are necessary if they are to be freely functional. They may blame others for their misfortune or say that they are "the way they are" because of (1) the influences that prevailed during their childhood or young adult years; (2) the way that others have always mistreated them or behave toward them now; (3) karma accumulated in a prior

***work** 1. Mental or physical endeavor directed toward the production or accomplishment of something. 2. The means by which one earns one's livelihood. 3. Something that one does as an occupation, duty, or service.

incarnation, (4) adverse planetary influences; (5) they can't help themselves regardless of how hard they try.

In the Bhagavad Gita, the words *work*, *duty*, and *action* are often interchangeably used in regard to behaviors recommended for devotees on the spiritual path:

> No one can avoid the performance of work even for a moment; every being is impelled to act by impulses which are innate to its nature. Do the work that is your duty; that action is superior to nonaction. Even your body cannot be maintained without the performance of some kind of action. *(3.5 & 8)*

The only worthwhile work for devotees of God is attentive performance of actions which contribute to their well-being and spiritual liberation, the well-being and spiritual growth of others, and the well-being of Nature. For them, all actions (thoughts, emotional states, states of awareness, and behaviors) which are not *entirely* constructive should immediately be renounced and avoided in the future.

If it is not easy to overcome troublesome tendencies or habits, there is no need to feel guilty or to despair. All that is required of us is that we do our best. We accomplish our purposes most efficiently when we remain aware of the fact that, because we are spiritual beings, we can choose to determine our thoughts, moods, physical states, relationships, and circumstances. When our primary aspiration is to awaken to Self-knowledge and God-realization, our thoughts, moods, and actions are inclined to be supportive of that ideal. When only the desire to experience a reasonably comfortable, ordinary human life is compelling, our thoughts, moods, and actions are inclined to be supportive of that desire. In either instance, because of the responsiveness of Cosmic Mind to our mental states and states of awareness—and our conscious or unconscious acquiescence to events that occur—corresponding relationships and circumstances will be experienced. Our circumstances always accurately

indicate our subjective states and our actions.

Kriya Yoga initiates are advised to adhere only to those actions (thoughts, feelings, and behaviors) which nurture *sattvic* (elevating, illuminating) influences. The mind is then purified, emotions are harmonized, physical health is nurtured, and soul qualities are more easily expressed. Actions which enable *rajasic* influences to prevail disturb the balance of the basic mind-body constitution. They also contribute to mental and emotional conflicts, restlessness, physical debility, intellectual errors, and purposelessness. Actions which enable *tamasic* influences to prevail contribute to laziness, procrastination, apathy, mental dullness, and blurred awareness.

The attentive nurturing of sattvic influences is spiritual practice that is just as important as regular meditation practice and study of metaphysical principles. How one's schedule of daily activities is organized, the thoughts that are allowed to prevail, the emotions that are habitually present, the foods that are eaten, the relationships one chooses to establish and maintain, the kind of work that is done to earn money, the mental attitude one has when giving to charity or rendering service—every action that is performed—should nurture the increase of sattvic influences in one's life. When one is spiritually enlightened, because awareness is clarified, behaviors are spontaneously and appropriately soul-directed. Until then, all actions should be performed to allow the beneficial influences of Nature to be supportive.

- Schedule your daily activities to enable you to efficiently accomplish your purposes. Eliminate nonessential activities. Welcome unplanned events that occur which are supportive of your purposes. Live with alert intention. Be decisive.
- Paramahansa Yogananda always advised "plain living and high thinking." Allow only constructive thoughts to prevail. When looking toward the future, be a possibility-thinker.
- Cultivate emotional calmness. Be soul-confident.

- Establish and maintain only those personal relationships which are constructive and useful. Be kind and courteous to everyone; refuse to be tempted or influenced to depart from your chosen path in life.
- If you work to earn money, choose work which allows you to effectively use your knowledge and skills. The results of your work should be entirely constructive. Serve real needs; the money will naturally follow. Wisely use what you earn; save a portion, spend for your needs, give a portion to worthy causes. Provide for your comfort and security so that you will have peace of mind and freedom to live enjoyably.
- When you give to a worthy cause or offer your volunteer service, avoid sentimental emotionalism; cultivate insightful compassion. Give and serve without expecting to be rewarded. Be a conduit through which blessings can freely flow.

Just as our outer actions should be performed without attachment to them or to their results, meditation should be regularly practiced without attachment to the process or the outcome of practice. Remember that the purpose of meditation practice is to calm the mind and clarify your awareness so that your real nature can shine forth. To think in terms of having to acquire an enlightened state of consciousness is a mistake. The essence of your being is ever luminous and all-knowing. Right living and effective meditation practice will unveil your innate reality.

Note: For further information about lifestyle routines which are recommended for Kriya Yoga devotees, read chapters sixteen and seventeen in the Bhagavad Gita.

I never allow the word "impossible" to become
rooted in my mind; nor should you.
– Paramahansa Yogananda –

The Unfoldment of Soul Abilities

In the third chapter of Patanjali's *yoga-sutras*, meditative contemplation which enables the Kriya Yoga devotee to experience samadhi is explained and some of the exceptional powers of perception which may be unfolded are described. The emphasis is on using exceptional powers of perception primarily for the purpose of perfecting God-realization.

1. An unwavering flow of attention is concentration.
2. Concentration directed to an object one aspires to know or an ideal to be realized is meditation.
3. The self-shining of the object of meditation devoid of obstructing characteristics is samadhi.
4. Concentration, meditation, and samadhi, practiced together, is meditative contemplation.
5. Mastery of meditative contemplation results in the emergence of illuminating, intuitive knowledge.
6. Intuitive knowledge should be applied to discover progressively higher levels of consciousness.

Devotees who aspire to Self-realization should know what they are endeavoring to accomplish when they meditate. Concentration results in meditation; steady meditative contemplation results in samadhi—either identification of awareness with the object of meditation (samadhi with support) or the free state of wholeness (samadhi without a supporting object). Awakened intuitive knowledge and unfolded abilities should be applied to accomplish pure or transcendent samadhi. Intuition and abilities used primarily to accomplish mundane purposes further restrict awareness and limit the soul.

7. The three practices [concentration, meditation, and contemplation] are internal in comparison to the five practices which precede them.

8. They become external when samadhi which has no supporting object is realized.

The *five practices* which precede the practice of concentration, meditation, and meditative contemplation are the restraints and intentional actions described in chapter two (sutra 30 and 32); posture; pranayama; and internalization of attention. When samadhi without the support of an object of meditation is permanently realized, no further clarification of awareness is necessary. Meditative practices which preceded that realization are discontinued.

9. The superior, constructive influences of samadhi eliminate restrictive subliminal tendencies and instinctual driving forces.
10. The tranquil flow of awareness that then occurs is due to its innate purity.
11. Because of the influences of samadhi, fluctuations of mental modifications cease, awareness of wholeness prevails.
12. When the meditator's concentration is completely focused, sequential ideas that arise in the mind are similar.
13. The preceding four verses explain the kinds, fine variations, and states of transformations that occur in the meditator's field of awareness.

Sustained superconscious states weaken, subdue, and remove subconscious conditionings and the urges of instinctual tendencies. Awareness then flows naturally as impelled by its innate inclination. When practicing meditation prior to realization of transcendent samadhi, ideas that arise in the mind are consecutive and similar rather than random and disconnected.

14. A substance has properties which have latent, not yet manifested, and expressive potentiality.
15. The orders and arrangements of subliminal impressions are the causes of their manifestations.

The mind is a substance because it is a manifestation of cosmic forces.

A mind which is not yet fully illumined is conditioned by many impressions (*samskaras*) which have been accumulated as the result of the soul's mundane experiences and perceptions. These impressions comprise karma (subliminal influences with potentiality to cause effects) which may be expressed and thus neutralized; resisted, understood, and overcome; or transcended. How these mental conditionings are organized and interrelated determines how they may be influential. Devotees on the path of light are advised to (1) stop accumulating karma by living wisely and selflessly; (2) weaken the influences of subconscious influences by active resistance, mastery of sensory and mental impulses, and constructive thinking and behavior; (3) cultivate samadhi states by regular practice of superconscious meditation.

Note: In the following sutras, some results of successful practice of meditative contemplation are described. For these specific purposes, meditation is practiced until the mind is calm and awareness is tranquil. Attention is then directed to that which one aspires to know or experience until knowledge unfolds or the desired circumstance is actualized.

16. By contemplation on the threefold transformations of consciousness, knowledge of past and future can be acquired.

The *threefold transformations of consciousness* occur at the levels of unconsciousness (and subconsciousness), the ordinary conscious or waking state which is influenced by subliminal tendencies, and superconsciousness. The first two levels are ego- and mind-identified; all superconscious states indicate degrees of increased Self-awareness. Past events and experiences can be remembered. Future events and circumstances can be known by insightful analysis of their existing causes: the prevailing states of consciousness, mental attitudes, beliefs, expectations, desires, tendencies, and habitual behaviors. Undesirable, future events and circumstances of all kinds can be avoided by eliminating or changing their existing causes.

17. Words, their meanings, and ideas about them are often intermingled and confused. By contemplation on the words spoken by

people and the sounds vocalized by creatures, their meanings can be comprehended.

The intentions, mental states, and state of consciousness of others can be known by observing their spoken words and discerning the purpose for their utterance. With practice, even the vocalized sounds of creatures can be interpreted with accuracy.

18. By contemplation on the influential forces of mental impressions [accumulated karma], knowledge of previous incarnations is acquired.

Because of the persistence of mental impressions, our present inclinations and desires may provide clues that can enable us to know how we lived and behaved prior to being born into this world. Although it is possible for some souls to remember events and circumstances that were perceived or experienced in previous physical embodiments and during sojourns in astral realms between physical incarnations, devotees who aspire to enlightenment are advised to avoid preoccupation with such matters. Clear memories related to past incarnations that spontaneously arise in the mind and provide helpful insight can be welcomed. Most endeavors to remember past incarnations culminate in purposeless speculation, illusory thinking, and excessive indulgence in fantasy—conditions in opposition to those which are supportive of spiritual awakening and the fulfillment of our destiny.

19. Meditative contemplation on the ideas presented by another person provides knowledge of the contents of their mind and states of awareness.
20. However, this apprehension of knowledge does not support the mental states or states of awareness of others because the purpose of knowing is not that of fully identifying with those states.

Ideas expressed or defined by another person can provide us with insight into how their mind processes information, the contents of their

mind, and their habitual mental states and states of awareness. Our dispassionate observation does not result in complete identification of our thoughts or awareness with theirs.

21. By contemplation on the relationship of the body's light in relationship to the eyes of others, one can become invisible.
22. By this, the disappearance of sound, taste, touch, smell, and hearing is explained.

Because a material object which is not perceived by means of the senses is not observed, to be "invisible" one has only to decide to be unobserved.

23. By contemplation on karmic influences which are fast or slow in producing effects, knowledge of events regarding [the circumstances of physical] death and other unusual occurrences can be acquired.

When subconscious conditionings are allowed to influence modes of thinking and behavior, their potency causes effects which correspond to their characteristics. When the driving forces of karmic influences are known, ordinary and unusual events that will occur in the near and distant future can be predicted with a reasonable degree of accuracy. Most spiritually unawake souls are fated to experience successive manifestations of circumstances produced by subjective causes until the potency of their karma is exhausted. Devotees who aspire to be removed from karmic influences can acquire knowledge of how to do so and diligently apply it. Subconscious conditionings can then be resisted by Self-disciplined actions and their potency transformed and directed to higher purposes. As spiritual awareness increases, karmic conditions become less influential. The soul's future circumstances are then determined by choice and by the impulses of grace.

24. Mental, moral, and spiritual strength is acquired by contemplation on friendliness, compassion, and other noble qualities.
25. By contemplation on various aspects of power, one becomes empowered.

Hostility, indifference, cruelty, selfishness, fear, refusal to acknowledge the innate divinity of others, and doubt are ignoble qualities. Friendliness, compassion, kindness, generosity, courage, willingness to acknowledge the innate divinity of every person, and faith in God are noble qualities to be nurtured and actualized. Although identification of awareness with various aspects of God's expressive forces is possible, the most soul-satisfying contemplative practice is that which results in Self- and God-realization.

26. By contemplation on the light of consciousness, intuitive knowledge of veiled, subtle, and remote things is acquired.

When the luminous, omnipresent reality of consciousness is apprehended, all of its categories and aspects, from the field of Existence-Being to the realm of gross matter, can be intuitively discerned.

27. By contemplation on the Sun [and its relationship to its planets and other phenomena in space], intuitive knowledge of planetary movements in space and of the evolution, persistence, and dissolution of the universe can be acquired.
28. By contemplation on the Moon and star systems, intuitive knowledge of their relationships and movements can be acquired.
29. By contemplation on the Pole Star, knowledge of the movements and relationships of the stars is acquired.
30. Contemplation on the chakra opposite the navel enables one to have knowledge of the body's systems.

The physical body through which our awareness flows and expresses is composed of cells grouped together to form tissues, organs, and the specialized circulatory, respiratory, digestive, excretory, endocrine, muscular, skeletal, and nervous systems. The organizing processes of the body are influenced by three governing principles.

31. Contemplation on the appetite and thirst centers provides mastery over hunger and thirst.

Although a moderate diet composed of nutrition-rich foods in accord with one's basic mind-body constitution is recommended and an adequate amount of pure water is necessary, compulsive ingestion of unnecessary foods and liquids should be avoided. With practice, the appetite and thirst centers can be regulated. Also, by nurturing awareness of the medulla oblongata at the base of the brain and the cervical chakra opposite the throat, and by remembering that the body is primarily vitalized by flows of life force that flow into it through the medulla oblongata, dependence upon gross food can be diminished. By using a little known technique, some yogis can vitalize the body with life force and live without food.

32. By contemplation on the center of equilibrium, stability of awareness is acquired.

The Sanskrit term *kurma-nadi* used in the original text is translated here as "center of equilibrium." *Kurma* means tortoise or turtle. A *nadi* is a channel through which life force flows. Meditative contemplation on the designated nadi will result in "turtle-like" slowness of respiration and calm, unwavering awareness. Experimentation will enable one to become aware of a current of life force flowing from the base of the brain downwards to the dorsal chakra. Identification with it results in unwavering, soul-centered awareness.

33. By contemplation on the light of the crown chakra, liberated souls have direct perception of Reality.

When awareness is clarified and restricting influences are absent, the soul is liberated and direct perception of the reality of God is constant. This sutra is sometimes translated as: "By contemplation on the light of the crown chakra, *siddhas* (perfected or liberated souls) may be perceived with inner vision." Although it is the testimony of many saints that such perceptions are possible, the highest realization to which one should aspire is that of complete awakening in God.

34. By contemplation on absolute Pure Consciousness, all innate knowledge is certainly revealed.

35. By contemplation on the heart [the reality of Being], knowledge of it is realized.
36. By contemplation on the self-existent reality of consciousness, one acquires the ability to clearly discern the difference between it and ordinary states of awareness and relative experiences.

Meditative contemplation on the supreme reality of Pure Consciousness is the direct way to Self- and God-realization. The *heart* that energizes the mind and enlivens the body, and which is to be contemplated and realized, is the reality of Being. The true Self of us is ever pure and changeless; ordinary states of awareness are blurred and fragmented by fluctuations and transformations caused by restlessness and subliminal influences. When subliminal influences no longer prevail—because of having been subdued or transcended—alert Self-awareness allows the difference between it and conditioned states of awareness to be clearly discerned.

37. Because of meditative contemplation on the reality of God, supernormal powers of perception unfold.
38. If allowed to flow outward, these powers of perception become obstacles to further spiritual growth and to perfecting samadhi. If used wisely, they become superior abilities to be used to resist, weaken, and eliminate subliminal and instinctual influences which restrict free flows of awareness.

If extraordinary powers of intuition, hearing, touch, vision, taste, and touch are used only to fulfill mundane desires or to nurture egocentric inclinations, they interfere with spiritual growth. *Siddhis* (the powers or abilities that may accompany spiritual awakening) should be used to accomplish Self- and God-realization.

39. By removing the cause of attachment to the body and by focused concentration, one's awareness can penetrate the mind and body of others.

The cause of attachment to the body is the erroneous idea that one is

a body, reinforced by sentimental attachment to mental, emotional, and physical states, environmental conditions, and personal circumstances. When a spiritual teacher's awareness *penetrates* the mind and body of a disciple, the teacher's Truth-realization and vital force is transmitted to the disciple in accord with the disciple's attunement and receptivity.

40. By mastering the upward-flowing aspect of life force in the body, one can be invulnerable to the various forces of Nature and consciously depart the body at the time of transition from it.

When the influence of the upward-flowing aspect of prana (*udana prana*) prevails, a feeling of physical lightness is sensed, one's awareness is identified with the higher chakras, and superconscious states are easy to maintain. The involuntary actions of this aspect of life force are regulated from the medulla oblongata and can be consciously regulated from the cerebrum. At the time of transition from the body, the upward flowing aspect of life force assists the soul's departure. If, because of an accident or illness, the transition process begins to occur prematurely, it can be delayed by an act of will.

41. When the actions of the vital forces of the lumbar chakra are free-flowing, inner and outer radiance [health and vitality] is manifested.
42. By meditative contemplation on Om, subtle sound perceptions are heard.

The preliminary subtle sounds that are heard are the emanations of prana frequencies from the chakras. When a clear, flowing sound is heard, awareness can be merged with it while contemplating its source: the omnipresent field of the one Consciousness.

43. By contemplation on the relationship between the body and space, and identifying awareness with the idea of weightlessness, levitation is experienced.

While levitation of the body is possible, it should not be of primary

interest to one who aspires to enlightenment. Of greater value is to acquire the ability to "elevate" one's awareness: to remove it from mundane influences which interfere with awakening to, and maintaining, Self- and God-realization.

44. By meditative contemplation on transcendent states beyond the gross modifications of the mind, the coverings that confine the Self are unveiled.
45. By meditative contemplation on gross matter, its essential attributes and components and their subtle aspects and drives, mastery over the energies and forces of matter is acquired.
46. By mastery of the elements, exceptional abilities become pronounced, the body and mind are refined and purified, and the indestructible qualities [the constituent attributes] of matter are known.

One *covering that confines the Self* is the primary delusion caused by imperfect Self- and God-knowledge. When, by intellectual discrimination and intuitive perception the nature of Consciousness (and its categories, aspects, properties, and processes) is known, one can live in harmony with natural laws and have their full support.

47. [Some] characteristics of physical perfection are attractiveness, bright complexion, strength, and adamantine hardness.

The word *adamantine* (having the hardness and luster of a diamond) is used to describe a healthy body vitalized by soul forces and impervious to disease because of its strong immune system.

48. By contemplation on the senses, their powers of cognition, inherent characteristics, pervasiveness and influences, mastery of them is acquired.

The senses receive information; perception allows it to be processed by the mind and interpreted by the intellect. Distinct from the senses, mind, and intellect, is the observing soul which is superior to them.

49. Having mastered the senses, and knowing the distinction between the attributes of Nature and the Self, supremacy over all states of consciousness is demonstrated.
50. By meditative contemplation on the distinction between the attributes of Nature and the reality of the one Consciousness, perceptions of omnipotence and omniscience are acquired.
51. When the causes of bondage have been removed by renouncing attachments to supernormal abilities and to perceptions of omnipotence and omniscience, soul awareness is restored to wholeness.

When individualized awareness is no longer confined, the soul's ability to apprehend the unrestricted power and complete knowledge innate to consciousness is reclaimed. Attachment to exceptional abilities and purified powers of perception confines soul awareness to the illusional sense of independent selfhood. After they have been wisely used to purify the mind and to accomplish samadhi without the support of an object of meditative contemplation, their renunciation allows complete enlightenment to be actualized.

52. Upon awakening to Self-knowledge there should be no pride or egotism in regard to spiritual status or attachment to it, as this can cause a return to former, unclear states of awareness.

When the ego is purified, the enlightened soul knows that Self-realization is not an attainment; it is the restoration of soul awareness to its original, clear state.

53. By meditative contemplation on moments of time and of sequential changes that occur, knowledge [of time and causation] born of discernment arises.
54. By discerning moments and sequential changes that occur, the difference between similar events that is not ordinarily observed is discerned.

When attention is diffused or awareness is unclear, one may mistak-

enly presume that similar events which occur at different moments of time, and have similar but different causes, to be the same. The truth is: what occurs at any moment is unique to that moment because it corresponds to its specific cause.

55. Absolute discriminative knowledge is simultaneous knowledge of the entirety of the universe and its aspects and manifestations.

When we are cosmic conscious, awareness of omnipresence and omniscience that includes comprehensive knowledge of the reality of God and the various aspects, expressions, and processes of the universe is simultaneous.

56. When the purity of individualized awareness is the same as the purity of the Self, absolute liberation of consciousness is realized.

Only a portion of an egocentric soul's awareness identifies with mental and physical characteristics which modify it; the essence of being is always clear and tranquil. When egoism is replaced by Self-knowledge and individualized awareness is clarified, soul freedom results.

Dialogue

Kriya Yoga Philosophy, Traditions, and Practices

Your participation is invited. Use the form provided with each issue or write a brief note to the CSA office.

Q. In a recent article in Truth Journal, you mentioned that, after this year, you will be more selective before giving Kriya initiation. Why is this so? What will be the requirements?

Since 1956 I have been a missionary (one who shares the "good news" that every person is literally made in the image and likeness of God and can awaken to that realization). Following my guru's example, I have given freely of myself and offered initiation to all who expressed a desire to learn the meditation practices of this Kriya Yoga tradition. Now, as my guru did in his later years, I will only initiate individuals who are willing to be totally committed to this path. While I will continue to lecture, counsel, and write for the benefit of all who are responsive to these teachings, I will be more selective before offering initiation.

In the early 1950s, during a meeting of the Board of Directors of his organization, Paramahansaji said, "Until now, I have been very liberal about giving initiation. Most people who come to us think that, after one or two years of study, and after they have been initiated, they have learned everything we have to offer. They then leave to study other systems. When they do that, they do not have the benefit of our support when they need it the most and we do not have the benefit of their friendship and support. It is not fair to them and it is not fair to us."

According to Babaji (as told to Lahiri Mahasaya), if the one

who performs the rite of initiation is not authorized by his or his guru to do so, or if the person who asks to be initiated is not sincere, real initiation does not occur—the experience is neither transformative nor empowering.

Of the five thousand (at least) people I have initiated in the United States and in other countries since 1956, fewer than one thousand have maintained a connection with me and the line of gurus. Until now, when a sample issue of *Radiance* has been given to new initiates, fewer than 50 percent have asked to receive future issues. When I initiate someone, I am not merely passing along interesting information; I bless them, ask the gurus to bless them, and give them knowledge that, if applied, will enable them to accomplish liberation of consciousness.

In the future, individuals who ask me for initiation should: (1) read *Autobiography of a Yogi* and my basic books in which I have explained the philosophical principles upon which Kriya Yoga practices are based; (2) meditate for at least six months on a regular schedule; (3) be capable of understanding the teachings; (4) respect the teachings and the gurus of this tradition; (5) be committed to practicing what is learned; (6) after initiation, maintain their connection and attunement with me and the gurus.

Q. I read that when Paramahansa Yogananda initiated disciples, he established a connection with them. What is meant by that?

When initiating, the guru infuses the disciple with spiritual force, which is received to the extent that the disciple is receptive. A spiritual (soul to soul) and mental connection is then established. When nurtured by attunement, it enables the radiations of the guru's consciousness and mind to continually flow to the disciple. According to one anecdote, a person who had been initiated by Paramahansaji later informed him that she had found a new teacher. He said, "All right, I will withdraw my ray from you." By doing that, he was no longer responsible for that person's

spiritual welfare.

Paramahansaji said to disciples, "I go through your souls every day." He thought about us, attuned his awareness with ours, and silently helped us. When a disciple thinks about the guru, when there is an attunement, the support of the guru's consciousness—which is merged in God—is received.

Q. Can flows of prana be directed by our thoughts?

Yes. For instance, after a degree of proficiency is attained in the practice of alternate nostril breathing, that pranayama can be practiced without using the fingers to close the nostrils. By being aware of the flows of air through the nostrils, one can gently *intend* that the flow be dominant through one nostril or flow evenly through both nostrils.

When meditating, by focusing awareness in the higher chakras, life force can be attracted upward through those chakras and directed into the spiritual eye and crown chakra.

When a guru transmits spiritual force, whether by placing his hands on the disciple, looking into the disciple's eyes, or merely thinking of the disciple, the flow of force is directed by the guru's intention or will.

Q. When India and Pakistan tested nuclear devices recently, for a few days afterwards the news media featured stories about a possible growing threat of nuclear war. Also, because of recent economic problems in Asia, some people are talking about difficult times ahead. What are your thoughts about these matters?

I think the political leaders on both sides were merely trying to demonstrate to themselves, and to each other, that their countries have achieved "world-class" status. Since India and Pakistan occupy the Indian subcontinent, nuclear war is out of the question. If a nuclear bomb were to be exploded in the northern region, air currents flowing from north to south would blanket

India with radiation. Small wars will probably continue to be waged in various regions of the world, for the most part because of greed, petty disputes, ethnic differences, and the discontent of people who are underprivileged or exploited. Worldwide nuclear war will not occur.

The financial circumstances of nations always fluctuate. I do not expect any extreme difficulties in the near future. And nothing that is occurring in the world at this time has anything to do with the ending of our current millennium and the beginning of a new one a little less than three years from now. The last ascending Dark Age cycle ended 300 years ago. We are now moving rapidly into the second (*dwapara*) ascending cycle during which the subtle properties of Nature are being discovered and mass spiritual awakening is occurring. The major needs of most people are to acquire knowledge of themselves as spiritual beings in relationship to God and to live with knowledge of meaningful purpose in harmony with natural laws. Some major needs on a global scale are to stabilize population growth, ensure an adequate food supply, inspire people to be responsible for their own well-being, reduce crime, and nurture the planet.

Q. What does it mean to be spiritually liberated?

We are spiritually liberated when our awareness is not distorted by subliminal influences; delusions (erroneous beliefs) and illusions (incomplete or inaccurate perceptions) are absent; and we are fully aware of and established in our real, pure conscious nature. The final state of spiritual liberation is described in Patanjali's *yoga-sutras (refer* to sutra 56, page 19 of this issue of *Radiance*). A liberated person lives a natural, pure life, and spontaneously expresses the characteristics described in the first three verses of chapter sixteen in the Bhagavad Gita.

Addendum

This issue of *Radiance* has fewer pages than usual because retreat activities this summer require much of my time, I have several writing projects to complete, and fewer inquiries were received for the Dialogue section since the last issue. Use the form enclosed to inquire about the philosophy and practices of this tradition or to ask questions.

July 25 is Mahavatar Babaji Commemoration Day. Remember Babaji with feelings of gratitude when you meditate on that day. Memorize and be inspired by Babaji's prophetic words to Paramahansa Yogananda, in 1920, "Kriya Yoga will spread to all lands, and aid in the harmonization of the nations through humanity's personal, transcendental perception of the Infinite."

Autumn Programs at CSA Headquarters (Saturdays)
Meditation Retreats: October 24 and November 28
Holy Season Meditation 10 a.m. to 1 p.m.: December 12

Information about the new book I am currently preparing to send to the printer is on the back cover. You may order in advance or await the general announcement which will be mailed in August.

Advance Announcement
Publication: Late September

THE PATH OF LIGHT
A Guide to 21st Century Discipleship and
Spiritual Practice in the Kriya Yoga Tradition

PART ONE
Basic Teachings
Lifestyle Guidelines
Spiritual Practices
Initiation and Discipleship
Meditation Routines

PART TWO
The Yoga-Sutras
(with brief commentary)

PART THREE
An Introduction to the Bhagavad Gita

PART FOUR
The Lineage of Teachers of this Tradition

Glossary

Hardcover 160 Pages $7.95

CSA Press, Publishers

Radiance

A Forum for Kriya Yoga Initiates

October – December 1998 Number 18

The Eternal Way

GUIDELINES TO KRIYA YOGA DISCIPLESHIP

Knowledge that is not effectively applied is of little value. Demonstrate your total commitment to discipleship by living in accord with your abilities and your highest understanding until you are established in flawless Self- and God-realization

Light Through the Ages

THE SHIVA SAMHITA

An examination of an ancient text on yoga philosophy and practice, with commentary. Continued from issue 16.

Dialogue

PHILOSOPHY, TRADITIONS & PRACTICES

Open discussion. Reader participation invited.

Addendum

1999 Seminars, Initiations, and Meditation Retreats
May 2 - 28 Spiritual Training Opportunity

Thus transmitted by succession, the royal sages knew this [truth] until, after a long duration of time, it was lost to the world. This same ancient yoga is today declared by me to you, because you are my disciple and friend. This is indeed the supreme, secret knowledge.

Bhagavad Gita 4.2,3

The spine is the highway to the Infinite. Your body is the temple of God. It is within that God must be realized. Whatever places of pilgrimage you visit outwardly, whatever outward rituals you perform, the ultimate pilgrimage must be within. The ultimate religious rite must be the offering of your life-force on the altar of God-communion.

Paramahansa Yogananda

Radiance magazine is provided free to Kriya Yoga initiates who are CSA members and by subscription to other Kriya Yoga initiates who request it. U.S. residents: $6.00 for one year (4 issues). Outside the U.S.: $10.00, by airmail. Subscriptions should be renewed on an annual schedule, in January. We do not send renewal notices.

If you have friends who are Kriya Yoga initiates, ask them if they receive Radiance magazine. If they do not know about it, loan them a copy and inform them about our other publications.

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Guidelines to Kriya Yoga Discipleship

The Sanskrit word *kriya* means "action." Sincere disciples on the kriya yoga path faithfully practice to: (1) regulate and master their mental processes and sensory urges; (2) discern the reality of their true, spiritual nature and be established in it; (3) surrender their illusional sense of independent selfhood (egoism) in order to realize (know and experience) the wholeness of Consciousness (God). If you are attentive to these practices, you are on the right course in life. If not, *immediately* write a list of your priorities and put what matters most—your Self-realization—at the top of the list.

Every waking moment, be aware of your thoughts, moods, urges, inclinations, desires, choices of personal relationships, personal behaviors, and actions. Are they worthy of you? Are they of value? If not, conform them to your highest ideals. Resist urges, inclinations, and desires that, if allowed to prevail, may cause problems or divert you from your goals. Wisely choose your relationships. Modify your behaviors. Perform actions that will produce life-enhancing results.

You *can* master your mental processes and sensory urges and regulate your behaviors if you choose to do so. The key to doing this is mastery of attention. Where your attention flows, your awareness follows.

- What do you think about most of the time? That is what you are choosing to think about.
- What kind of emotional states do you allow to prevail most of the time? That is what you are choosing to experience.
- What is the quality of your habitual relationships? You are choosing to have those relationships.
- Are your circumstances supportive and satisfying? If not, you can

improve or change them by your decisions and actions.

- Are you healthy, happy, and prosperous? Think, feel, and act in ways that are supportive of health, happiness, and prosperity and these conditions will prevail.
- Is your meditation practice enjoyable and effective? Can you easily remove your attention from external conditions, subconscious influences, thoughts, and emotional states and adjust your viewpoint so that your awareness is clear and calm? Until you can this easily by choice and intention, use meditation techniques to elicit physical relaxation, mental and emotional calmness, and superconscious states.

Use your powers of intelligence and intuition to clearly discern the difference between your true nature and your thoughts, moods, and physical states. Contemplate the fact that Consciousness alone exists. Its absolute (transcendent) aspect, devoid of attributes, is changeless; its relative aspects are manifested as the universe. It is individualized as the Self you are. Flawless knowledge and awareness of the reality of Consciousness is the final realization to which to awaken.

The primary obstacle to being Self- and God-realized is ego-identification. (Remember the difference between egoism and egotism: *egoism* is a mistaken sense of selfhood; *egotism* is an exaggerated sense of self-importance.) Egoism, the result of identification of soul awareness with mental, emotional, and physical states and with environmental circumstances, can be understood and transcended by acquiring knowledge of the soul and God and by expanding awareness beyond physical and mental boundaries. For many devotees, it is not easy to remove awareness from ego-sense because attention has been fixated on it for a long duration of time. Egotism, a personality characteristic supported by thoughts and feelings of insecurity and by ignorance (lack of understanding), can more easily be renounced once the uselessness of it is understood.

Are you practicing kriya pranayama every day? The technique is not only an aid to internalizing attention so that meditation

can be effectively experienced; its regular practice enlivens the nervous system, clarifies awareness, pacifies subliminal (unconscious and subconscious) influences, and encourages vital forces to freely circulate through the body.

Regular practice of kriya meditation techniques will also confirm your commitment to this path, reinforce your resolve to be Self-realized, and help to maintain the momentum of your awakening through the stages of spiritual growth.

Adherence to a complete routine of meditation practice (preparation, prayer, practice of techniques, sitting in the silence) every day is best. On those rare occasions when your schedule is interrupted, at least practice kriya pranayama for a few minutes. You can do this anytime during the day. If your usual speed of practice is 6 pranayamas a minute, you can do 12 in two minutes; 24 in four minutes, 36 in six minutes, or 48 in eight minutes. Surely, you can schedule at least a few minutes for your practice. After doing kriya pranayamas, sit quietly for a few minutes, soul-centered and God-aware, to allow the calming effects to influence your mind and body.

To acquire knowledge, and to be inspired and motivated to live effectively and be steadfast on the spiritual path, read *The Eternal Way: The Inner Meaning of the Bhagavad Gita*, *The Path of Light*, and *Autobiography of a Yogi*.

As an initiate of this kriya yoga tradition, you know what to do to live effectively and fulfill your purposes. You have been given the meditation techniques by which you can liberate your consciousness. Skillfully use the knowledge you have.

The temple of God is within you. Enter into this quietness.
Sit in meditation with the light of intuition brightly shining.
In silence, there is no restlessness, searching, or striving.
Paramahansa Yogananda

The Shiva Samhita

The *Shiva Samhita* is believed to have been written over five hundred years ago. The author is unknown. *Shiva* represents Pure Consciousness, the repository of knowledge of itself. *Parvati*, the creative energy aspect of Consciousness, is portrayed as asking questions so that knowledge of yoga and the consummation of yoga practice can be revealed. A *samhita* (Sanskrit *sam*, "to bring or put together") is a collection of information about a chosen subject.

The presentation is concise because it is presumed that the reader will be intelligent enough to understand the meaning or will have the benefit of a teacher who can explain it.

Chapter Three: Continued from issue number 16
On Yoga Practice: The Vital Airs (Pranas)

66. After this [after practicing as instructed in the previous verses], by gradual endeavor the yogi attains the state of consummation. Then, having eliminated all the seeds of karma which existed from the beginning, that one drinks the nectar of immortality.

(The previous verses describe practices that remove one's awareness from the influences of cosmic forces related to the five lower chakras.) The consummation of practice is transcendent samadhi: superconscious realization of absolute Existence-Being which is not supported by thoughts or objects of perception. When the fully illumined mind is devoid of conditionings which can cause unwanted effects, the liberated soul is removed from the necessity of experiencing physical births and deaths.

67. When the jivanmukta [*jiva*, soul; *mukta*, free], tranquil yogi has by practice accomplished the consummation of samadhi, and when this samadhi can be voluntarily experienced, then let that one take hold of

the conscious intelligence, together with prana, and with the force of kriya-shakti conquer the six chakras, and absorb it into jnana-shakti [the power of pure knowledge).

When the soul which is free from karmic influences can experience the transcendent state at will, all that remains to be accomplished is to withdraw awareness from cosmic forces and their influences. This is done by the kriya (action) of directing the energy (shakti) of kundalini upwards through the vital centers in the spine, thus withdrawing awareness from them and merging it in pure Being.

68. We have described how to regulate the pranas in order to remove the causes of future misfortune. By this knowledge of vayu-sadhana all of the sufferings and enjoyments within this universe vanish.

Vayu, prana; *sadhana (sadh)*, to go straight to the goal. The practice of kriya pranayama, supported by other constructive actions, is the direct way to Self-knowledge that definitely results in liberation of consciousness.

69. When the skillful yogi can, by placing the tongue at the root of the palate, drink the vital airs, then the need for yoga practice ceases.

To "drink the vital airs" is to have the body sustained by soul force that flows into it through the medulla oblongata at the base of the brain. Touching the tip of the tongue at the "root of the palate" (the throat) causes saliva to flow more freely. Different tastes may be discerned in accord with the chakra influences which are dominant at the time. From the base chakra upward, the prana frequencies of the elements earth, water, fire, air, and ether (space with cosmic forces which are not yet gross), manifest sounds, lights, and tastes. The pleasant, predominantly sweet taste that eventually prevails is sometimes referred to as ambrosia, the "nectar of the gods" which confers immortality. It is not necessary that the tongue actually be placed as described in

this verse; so long as superconsciousness prevails, its influences will cause regenerative effects to occur. Modern scientists have discovered that the brain is capable of producing substances that can strengthen the body's immune system.

70. When the skillful yogi who knows the actions of prana and apana can drink the cool air, that one is entitled to liberation.

The *prana* aspect of life force is instrumental when we inhale air. The *apana* aspect of life force which removes waste matters from the body is instrumental when we exhale. "Drinking the cool air" is the sensation felt in the throat and spine as life force is pulled upwards with inhalation when practicing kriya pranayama. Upward flowing currents of life force withdraw the practitioner's awareness from physical sensations (and influences) and from mental involvements.

71. That wise yogi who drinks the ambrosial air in the right way, destroys fatigue, fever, decay and old age, and physical disabilities.

Regular, correct practice of kriya pranayama harmonizes the actions of life forces in the body and aids in balancing the *doshas*: the governing principles that determine the state of one's mind-body constitution. Abundant energy, good health, and slowing of biological aging processes are some of the results of right practice supported by wholesome lifestyle regimens.

Note: The final verses in this chapter, and in chapter four, describe some of the practices explained in the series of commentaries on the Shandilya Upanishad which were published in previous issues of *Radiance*.

Chapter Five: *The Obstacles to Yoga*

Parvati speaks:

1. O Lord, beloved Shankar!, for the sake of those whose minds search after the supreme end, tell me what are the obstacles and hindrances to [accomplishing] yoga [samadhi].

In this text, *Parvati* is the name used for the creative energy aspect of pure Consciousness-Knowledge (*Shiva*). Parvati is personified as Shiva's feminine companion who, for the benefit of others who aspire to liberation (the culmination of effective practice), asks that the way to spiritual growth and freedom be described. The Sanskrit word *Shankar* (to make auspicious) is used to indicate that revealed knowledge, when actualized, produces favorable circumstances.

Shiva (pure consciousness) responds:

2. Hear, O Goddess! I shall tell you all the obstacles that stand in the path of yoga [samadhi]. For one who aspires to liberation of consciousness, enjoyments are the greatest of all impediments.

In Vedic literature, various aspects of Consciousness which influence cosmic processes are referred to as gods; their energies are referred to as goddesses. "Enjoyments" are the pleasurable sensations experienced when the senses are stimulated or desires impelled by restlessness are fulfilled.

3. Attachments to relationships, things, status, and power; preoccupation with learning the scriptures; idle pastimes; and all mundane enjoyments sought after because of restlessness and a need for sensory stimulation are obstacles.

The key word in this verse is "attachment." Attachment, tenacious clinging or fixation of attention, confines awareness and keeps it contracted. Preoccupation with learning the scriptures, without having knowledge of their inner meaning and applying that knowledge, is a superficial endeavor.

4. Now hear of the impediments which arise because of attachment to religious rituals. Performance of religious rituals, worship of deities, observing days said to be sacred because related to astrological influences, craving liberation of consciousness, austerities, ascetic practices, contemplation of objects of meditation, making charitable gifts, and going on pilgrimages—are obstacles which dharma [duty] imposes.

Again, the key word is "attachment." All of the activities described, if performed with understanding, can be of value. The word *dharma*, as used in this verse, refers to duties to be fulfilled to support our well-being and the well-being of others and Nature. If we are zealous about performing an action, or obsessed with "doing it right" for the purpose of self-satisfaction or to acquire merit or to please God or the saints, the real purpose of the action is thwarted. We should *aspire* to liberation; "craving" implies needy, self-centered desire. Contemplation of God or of superconscious states we aspire to experience that results in insight is beneficial. Passive meditative contemplation, or addiction to the contemplation process or to pleasant moods elicited by such practice, will not result in insight or realization.

5. Now I shall describe the obstacles which arise from [partial] knowledge. Preoccupation with yogic procedures, knowledge of the network of nadis, subjugation of the senses, trying to awaken kundalini by forceful means, contemplation of the subtle senses, and knowledge of the actions of prana in the nadis.

Partial knowledge that results in fascination with the various practices of yoga, attempts to master sense urges by will power alone, endeavors to arouse the energies of kundalini by forceful means, and superficial analysis of the life forces and their actions is an obstacle to spiritual growth.

6. Now listen to the mistaken notions regarding diet. To think that samadhi can be induced by drinking certain chemical essences and by eating certain foods is a mistake.

7. Now hear about the mistaken notions regarding the influence of companions [and other matters]. "Keep the company of the virtuous; avoid that of the nonvirtuous." Measuring the heaviness and lightness of inspired and expired air is a useless practice.

Sat-sanga, companionship (*sanga*) with others who are truth- (*sat*) conscious, is of value if it uplifts us and supports our com-

mitment to the spiritual path. If our association with virtuous people is primarily for socializing or to satisfy emotional needs, it is of no spiritually beneficial value. It can be helpful to observe the force of air flowing through the nostrils during the early stages of meditation, to become aware of the relationship between refined breathing and mental states. Preoccupation with doing this is a diversion from the real purpose of meditation practice.

8. The notions that God is in the body, that God is the maker of forms, or that God has a form, or has no form, or is everything—all of these consoling doctrines are obstacles—impediments in the form of [presumed] knowledge.

Contemplation of the facts of life that results in insight is of value. To ponder various ideas about God merely to feel comfortable or justify complacency is a waste of time.

Four Kinds of Yoga

9. The four kinds of yoga are Mantra Yoga, Hatha Yoga, Laya Yoga, and Raja Yoga—which removes [the illusion of] duality.

Mantras (*manas*, mind; *tra*, to take beyond) can be used to involve one's attention, order thought processes, and clarify awareness. Some mantras are audibly chanted. Others are mentally recited or mentally "listened to." *Hatha Yoga* practices include *asanas* (postures), pranayamas, and other procedures that contribute to physical health, regulation of flows of vital force, awakening of kundalini energies, and improved powers of concentration that enable one to meditate effectively. *Laya* (absorption) *Yoga* is practiced to merge awareness with Om, the primordial sound current. *Raja* (royal or kingly, to denote superiority) *Yoga*, also referred to as *Ashtanga* (eight-limbed) *Yoga*, integrates all of the yogic processes, with emphasis on meditation practice and samadhi.

10. The four orders [classifications] of aspirants are: mild, moderate, ardent, and extremely ardent. Ardent [impelled by enthusiasm and devotion to an ideal] practitioners of yoga can most easily cross over the ocean of the world.

The "ocean of the world" is the realm of Nature—from the primordial field (Om, with its self-produced characteristics of space, time, and cosmic forces) to physical manifestation—which is illusory because it is constantly undergoing change and transformation. Soul awareness blindly identified with Nature's actions is clouded and confused.

11. Aspirants who are capable of only small endeavors, who are unaware of the facts of life, sickly, who find fault with their teachers; who are avaricious, prone to excessive eating, helplessly attached to others; who are fickle, timid, diseased, emotionally dependent, cruel; who are of weak character—are mildly inclined on the spiritual path. They can succeed after several years of practice. They should be taught mantra meditation practice [only].

A knowledgeable yoga guru (teacher) instructs disciples in accord with their capacity to learn and practice. To those whose aspiration is mild, general advice regarding lifestyle routines and personal behaviors will be offered. Audible chanting of a mantra may also be recommended.

12. The moderately aspiring devotees who are liberal minded and compassionate, who speak pleasantly, cultivate the virtues, and never go to extremes can be initiated into the practice of Laya Yoga.

Such persons may be capable of mentally chanting Om while sitting quietly, then listening to subtle, inner sounds.

13. Steady minded, knowing the practice of Laya Yoga, independent, energetic, large-hearted, considerate, forgiving, truthful, courageous, full of faith, devoted to their guru, engaged always in the practice of yoga—such aspirants are ardent. They can be initiated into Hatha Yoga and its branches.

14. Those who have abundant energy, are enterprising, engaged in right actions, heroic; who know the scriptures, who persevere, who are free from the effects of blind emotions and are not easily confused; who are healthy and vital, moderate in their diet, have mastered their senses, are fearless, clean, skillful, charitable and helpful to all; who are competent, steadfast, talented, contented, forgiving, good natured, devout; who keep their spiritual practices secret, are of pleasant speech, peaceful; who worship God and honor the teacher; who are averse to wasting their time in useless social activities and are acquainted with the duties expected of them, quickly obtain success. They are entitled to be initiated into all of the Yogas [including Raja Yoga].

Extremely ardent truth seekers whose soul qualities are evident and whose thoughts and actions are *sattvic* (pure) can easily learn these philosophical principles and practices. They can quickly awaken to Self- and God-realization.

– *To be continued*

The superior, constructive influences of samadhi eliminate restrictive subliminal tendencies and instinctual driving forces. The tranquil flow of awareness that then occurs is due to its innate purity. Because of the influences of samadhi, fluctuations of mental modifications cease and awareness of wholeness [oneness] prevails.

Patanjali's Yoga-Sutras 3.9,10,11

He only is wise who is devoted to realizing, not merely reading about, revelations. Exchange your useless speculations for actual God-communion.

Lahiri Mahasaya

Dialogue

Your participation is invited. Use the form provided with each issue of *Radiance* or write a brief note to the CSA office.

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1. I'm still having problems with the kriya breathing technique and am not having desired results when I meditate.

Sit upright, poised, and alert. Inhale deeper than usual, exhale and relax. Begin kriya pranayama practice. Pull the current upwards through the spine when you breathe in, let the current flow down when you breathe out. When inhaling, drop your tongue back a little, to open the throat, so that when you breathe in—with air flowing against the back of your throat—you feel a cool sensation. Relate that cool sensation to the spine and feel that you are "pulling" a cool current of life force through the spine, from the base chakra to the spiritual eye and higher brain. Pause for a moment. Exhale and let a "warm" current flow down to the base chakra. Pause a moment. Repeat. Breathe in and out through your mouth, to ensure that you can feel the cool sensation against the back of the throat and create the "suction" effect. When you are able to practice this process easily, do it with your mouth closed, breathing through your nostrils—using the "suction" effect when inhaling. When practicing this technique, breathe naturally, a little more deeply than usual, without excessive expansion and contraction of the rib cage.

Because inhalation is a little deeper than usual, and exhalation is longer, five or six cycles of pranayama will be done each minute. As carbon dioxide is removed from the blood, the need for breathing is diminished. After completing pranayama practice, the normal breathing rate will be slow. Slow, quiet breathing has a calming effect on the mind, causing thought processes

to be more subtle and orderly and freeing awareness for concentration on the object of meditation. After pranayama practice, alert and attentive, sit in the tranquil state.

If you are not having results, do not desire them. Practice with alert attention. Results will follow. Dissolve self-conscious awareness while contemplating pure consciousness. In this kriya yoga tradition it is taught that one should renounce the effects of spiritual practice. When we endeavor to "make something happen" we are still functioning from ego-centered awareness, presuming that there is a distance between the individualized aspect of Consciousness and the one field of Consciousness.

2. When practicing kriya pranayama, what is the significance of the sounds "aw" and "ee?"

These are the sounds which are naturally produced when inhaling ("aw") and exhaling ("ee" or "hee") during kriya pranayama practice. It is not necessary that they be loud.

3. Why is it recommended that kriya pranayama be practiced in sets of twelve? Can it be practiced without counting?

According to the gurus of this tradition, twelve kriya pranayama cycles cleanse the channels (*nadis*) through which life force flows through the astral body and refresh and restore the physical systems to a balanced state. When inclined to increase the number of cycles, add one cycle each day to the stage of doing twenty-four cycles. After a few months, gradually increase to thirty-six, then to forty-eight. If you have been practicing regularly for two or three years, counting is not necessary; do as many as you feel comfortable doing. Avoid effort.

4. Although I have been practicing the kriya pranayama technique for only a short time, I am curious about the second, third, and fourth kriya meditation techniques.

Mantra meditation practice, and the techniques taught when one is initiated into kriya yoga meditation practices (maha mudra or the alternate preliminary technique, kriya pranayama, and jyoti mudra) are sufficient to enable one to accomplish superconscious states and samadhi without the support of thoughts or objects of contemplation. The advanced techniques are supplemental practices, given when the disciple is proficient in the use of the basic techniques—which usually requires several years of diligent practice.

The following anecdote is from Paramahansa Yogananda's book *Autobiography of a Yogi* (chapter thirty-five):

> Lahiri Mahasaya carefully graded [the practice of] *Kriya* [meditation techniques] into four progressive initiations. He bestowed the three higher techniques only after a devotee had manifested definite spiritual progress. One day, a certain *chela* [disciple], convinced that his worth was not being duly evaluated, gave voice to his discontent.
>
> "Master," he said, "surely I am ready now for the second initiation." At this moment the door opened to admit a humble disciple, Brinda Bhagat. He was a Banaras postman.
>
> "Brinda, sit by me here." The great guru smiled at him affectionately. "Tell me, are you ready for the second *Kriya* [initiation]?"
>
> The little postman folded his hands in supplication. "Gurudeva," he said in alarm, "no more initiations, please! How can I assimilate any higher teachings? I have come today to ask your blessings, because the first Kriya has filled me with such divine intoxication that I cannot deliver the letters!"
>
> "Already Brinda swims in the sea of Spirit." At these words from Lahiri Mahasaya, the other disciple hung his head.
>
> "Master," he said, "I see that I have been a poor workman, finding fault with my tools."

When Lahiri Mahasaya was with Babaji in the foothills of the Himalayas, for two weeks in 1861, he learned many medita-

tion techniques. Later, he emphasized the practice of those which had the most practical value. When practicing the second advanced meditation technique, mantras are used to enliven the chakras. The third and fourth advanced techniques are practiced by using the basic pranayama and a special mantra, while concentrating awareness in the higher chakras.

5. What does one need to do to be given permission to initiate others into kriya yoga meditation practices?

One needs to be sufficiently accomplished in kriya yoga practice as described in the first verse of chapter two of the *yoga-sutras* to have experienced a satisfactory degree of control over mental and sensory impulses; to be at least partially Self-realized; and to have purified the ego to the extent that ego-impelled motives or drives are longer compelling. One need not be enlightened. Attunement with the lineage of gurus and commitment to the kriya yoga path are necessary. Willingness to be of service without "wanting" to be an initiator is an important characteristic. An initiator should be a selfless conduit through which the power of Consciousness can be transmitted.

When, in late 1951, Paramahansa Yogananda told me to initiate others into kriya yoga practices, I understood that he was referring to the future, when I would be prepared to do it. He gave me permission to initiate when he ordained me because he knew that he would leave his body in 1952. When I offer initiation, I am fully aware that I am a representative of my guru and of Sri Yukteswar, Lahiri Mahasaya, and Babaji.

6. The processes of cosmic manifestation, as diagramed in the chart in some of your books, are not yet clear to me.

When the full reality of Consciousness and the processes of its cosmic manifestations is apprehended, you will be enlightened (have complete knowledge). Until then, there will be

aspects of Consciousness and details of cosmic processes which will not be understood. Do not despair; be steadfast on the path and continue to intellectually and intuitively ponder the facts of life. The knowledge that is within you will emerge.

Your comment reminded me of a project I have thought about: designing a larger chart with detailed information on this theme. I will prepare it within the next few weeks and announce its availability in the next issue of *Radiance*.

7. What is the reason for our sense of [independent] "I-ness" which seems to cause living [for me, at least] to be such a struggle? Are not others also aware of "I-ness"—yet seemingly enjoying their sojourn on Earth? My enjoyment seems to be hampered because of knowing that the real purpose for my being here is to become God-conscious.

The cause of the [illusional] sense of being independent of the one Consciousness (God) is excessive identification with the mind and body. When our awareness of "I-ness" is that of being an aspect of the one Consciousness, we know that our awareness of "I-ness" is but a viewpoint. When our awareness is strongly identified with the mind and body, it seems to us as though we are separated from God.

So far as I know, there are only two categories of human beings who say that their sojourn on Earth is enjoyable:

- Those who, because established in Self-knowledge, have a cosmic perspective and easily see through appearances. They can enjoy without attachments of any kind.
- Those who are addicted to their egocentric state because they believe that: (a) their present condition is their real nature; (b) the purpose of life is to satisfy desires and sense urges; (c) physical existence, although obviously temporary, is the only reality they (or anyone) will ever know. They are not really happy. When they are not involved in activities and relationships which provide enjoyment, they are dissatisfied. They also know that physical death is inevitable.

It is all right to experience pleasure and to enjoy living, learning, and experiencing. Living is much more satisfying when higher understanding and knowledge of meaningful purpose enable us to make wise choices.

8. Explain how to experience superconsciousness at will—not only when meditating, but also when relating to ordinary circumstances.

Superconsciousness—clear awareness devoid of modifying influences—is our natural state of soul awareness, described in Patanjali's *yoga-sutras* (1.3,4):

> When fluctuations in awareness cease, the seer [the perceiver, the true Self] abides in its own nature.
>
> When not abiding in its own nature, the seer is inclined to identify with the fluctuations and their modifying influences which manifest in the field of individualized awareness.

The key to experiencing superconsciousness at will is to remove attention from mental states and the senses to the extent that they can be dispassionately observed. With practice, this can be done by choice.

When meditating, internalize your attention. If necessary, use a meditation technique to involve your attention until thoughts, moods, and sense perceptions are absent.

At other times, recall the calm, clear state of awareness that you experienced during deep meditation and elicit it (let it come forth and prevail).

Superconsciousness is not a state to "go into"; it is a clear state of awareness to assume. Whether meditating or not, it can be helpful to center your attention at (and be aware of) the dorsal, cervical, spiritual eye, and crown chakras.

9. Describe methods to use to dissolve samskaras so that they won't cause future problems.

Samskaras are impressions stored in the subconscious level of the mind. Every thought, feeling, and perception leaves an impression, a memory, which somewhat modifies the mind and may influence our awareness.

First, observe your experiences and perceptions as they occur. To the extent possible, avoid negative reactions to what is experienced or perceived. Your mind will not accumulate more karma (samskaras with potential power to influence your awareness, reactions, or behaviors). Memories will be stored in the mind as information, without any power to influence your thoughts, actions, or circumstances.

Next, when aware of subconscious drives, tendencies, or inclinations that interfere with your soul-directed purposes and actions, disturb your peace of mind, or cause problems of any kind, refuse to allow them to have any power over you. Remain soul-centered, rational, emotionally calm, and focused on essential matters. Think constructively and decisively and perform all actions with conscious intention. Keep your basic mind-body constitution in a state of balance. Get sufficient rest. Eat nutritious foods. Avoid the company of others who are mentally confused, emotionally distressed, or who choose to remain undisciplined and purposeless. Pray and meditate until your awareness is clear and tranquil.

Repeated episodes of superconscious (samadhi) states leave impressions in the mind. These superior influences weaken and dissolve ordinary samskaras and release their forces to be used for higher purposes. Kriya pranayama practice, the free-flowing energies (shakti) of kundalini, purification of the intellect and of the ego, the unfoldment of higher knowledge, association with saints (if only by mental and spiritual attunement), and wholesome environmental conditions, also weaken and dissolve samskaras.

10. In the yoga-sutras (1.2): the *vrittis* are to be resisted and turned back to their origin. What is the origin of *vrittis*? Explain the meaning

of the word *light*: i.e. "light of Reality," "light of lights," "light of truth," "light of knowledge," etc.

Vrittis are mental fluctuations and transformations which occur in one's field of awareness when subliminal (below the threshold of conscious awareness) impulses and drives (*vasanas*) are influential. Vrittis originate at unconscious and subconscious levels of awareness. They can be pacified by nurturing mental and emotional calmness, by meditation practice to the stage of tranquility, and by [gentle] exercise of will power or intention. When the impulses that cause vrittis to manifest are pacified, superconsciousness prevails.

11. On this path it seems necessary for one to go from one teacher to another, looking outside of Self for answers. How can one determine who is the right teacher? It seems to me that determining a teacher's degree of spiritual maturity is difficult.

It is not necessary to "go from one teacher to another." If a sincere truth seeker is mentally, emotionally, and spiritually prepared, the guru- (teacher) disciple (learner) relationship will occur. The "right" teacher is one who is spiritually awake, established in Self-knowledge, and accessible.

If the teacher is not spiritually awake, he or she cannot help others to awaken. If the teacher is not established in Self-knowledge, what is taught will be inaccurate, irrelevant, or superficial. If the teacher is inaccessible, communication will not be possible. In the latter instance, if possible, one should learn from a spiritually awake disciple-representative of the teacher rather than seek another "connection."

We only have to acquire information from external sources until our innate knowledge is unfolded and we are able to actualize it in our lives. In truth, because Consciousness is whole, there is nothing external to ourselves. We know that we have met the right teacher for us when we feel the "rightness" of it at

the soul level—when we intuitively know that our search has ended because we have "come home."

12. What is the "recipe" for making an astrological bangle?

The bangle that was recommended by Sri Yukteswar and Paramahansa Yogananda is formed of thick strands of three metals. Gold, silver, and copper wires are twisted together and worn on the upper arm above the elbow or as a bracelet around the wrist. Some Vedic astrologers believe that pure metals (and certain flawless gemstones) emit subtle astral influences that can counteract adverse planetary radiations and other cosmic forces that circulate in Nature.

A bangle composed of gold, silver, and copper is usually recommended for general purposes. For bangles, rings, or gemstones to be used for specific purposes, the advice of a qualified, spiritually aware, Vedic astrologer is needed. The weight of the metals used for bangles may vary according to one's horoscope and normal body weight.

I do not know the exact weight of the bangle I have, which is heavy and seldom worn. Each strand of gold, copper, and silver is almost 1/8 inch thick and was perhaps 12 inches long before being twisted. The twisted length is a little over 11 inches. (I obtained it decades ago when the price for gold was only thirty-five dollars an ounce.)

It is only after the traveler has reached his goal that he is justified in discarding his maps. During the journey, he takes advantage of any convenient shortcut. There are many mechanical features in the law of karma that can be skillfully adjusted by the fingers of wisdom.
Swami Sri Yukteswar

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